

14th
Anniversary
Issue

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 15, NO. 1

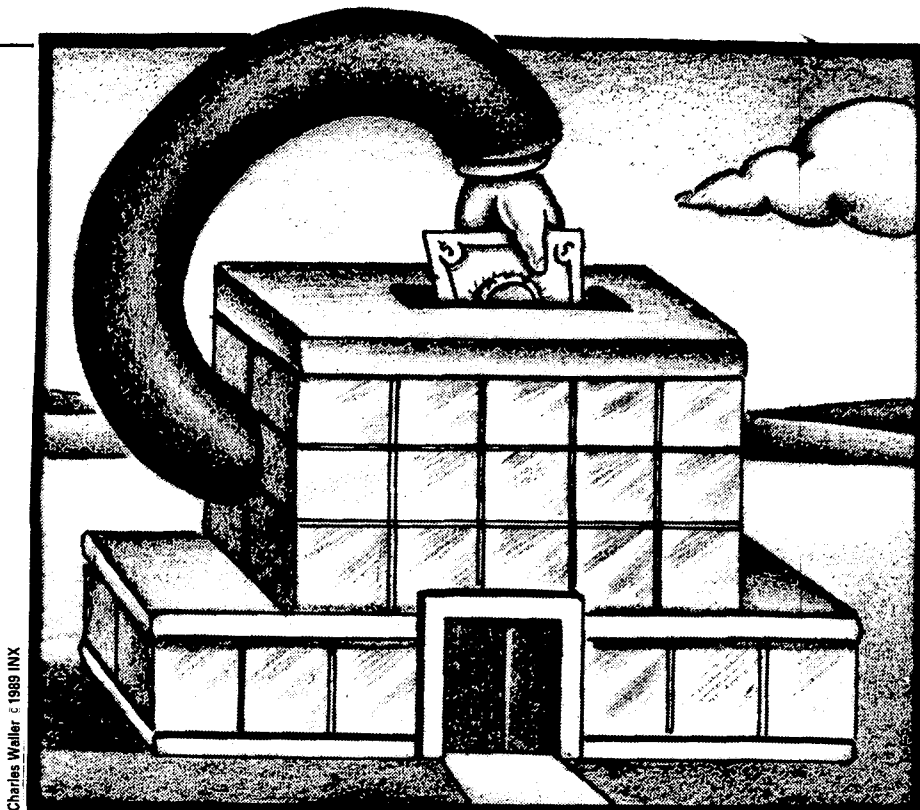
NOV. 7-13, 1990

\$1.25

FOOL EFFICIENCY

WHY GOOD MILEAGE
IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

BY DANIEL LAZARE
PAGE 11



Impatient financing and the rush to ruin

By Kevin Kelly

Cummins Engine Co. spent two years trying to find financial institutions willing to invest \$250 million in the company. Cummins, America's premier manufacturer of medium- and heavy-duty engines for trucks, needed the money to build the next generation of engines to meet rigorous 1994 emissions requirements. But, despite an almost surefire healthy return on investment, Cummins couldn't get any prospective investors to pony up.

The problem: financial institutions wanted quick, high returns for their investment. Cummins couldn't deliver. Its investment in new engine technology would take years to pay off. Moreover, the engine business is subject to wild, unpredictable swings. If fleet owners buy trucks, times are good. If not, too bad. Demand isn't something Cummins could guarantee.

Spurned by the financial markets, Cummins made an unorthodox move. It sought capital from its customers. Traditionally, American manufacturers have avoided investing in their suppliers. Instead they try to eke every last penny of advantage out of them. But faced with the choice of losing the technological edge Cummins' engines provide their products, three Cummins customers—Ford, Tenneco and Kubota—came up with the cash last July. **Fast bucks and slow death:** Call it another round in the war between Wall Street and the heartland. The bat-

tle's been raging since the early '80s, when leveraged-buy-out firms began raiding manufacturing companies and loading debt onto their balance sheets. And if it wasn't raiders, producers could count on Wall Street analysts and arbitrageurs to demand profits and rising earnings per share. In other words: quick returns.

But companies are realizing they can't deliver quick returns and remain competitive. So, increasingly, they're eschewing Wall Street recommendations and avoiding investments by impatient financiers seeking big bucks fast. Companies such as Cummins, tractor builder Caterpillar and truck maker Navistar are concentrating on revamping their production lines instead of hiking their stock prices. Says a trucking industry executive: "We can't survive and worry about our stock at the same time."

Critical shifts in thinking may be just beginning. How far they'll be carried depends on the ability of corporations to develop new ways of thinking about labor relations, financing and such obscure topics as cost accounting. Take financing. Some experts think—though many others disagree—that more and more companies will follow Cummins' path and seek investments from their customers. Though the practice has been out of favor for years, retailer Sears, Roebuck and Co. actually owned shares in its large suppliers as late as the '70s.

Customers offer what Wall Street lacks: patience. Indeed, discussing the need for "patient capital" is becoming common among liberal and progressive economists from Robert Reich to *Dissent* essayists. Capital not seeking an immediate return allows companies to invest with an eye toward the long term and, presumably, enables a company to pay more attention to competing with Japan than paying off the investor.

But for now, there aren't many sources of patient capital. Companies like Ford are thinking of making more direct investments, but that cuts across '70s notions about keeping suppliers at arms' length. And companies can expect little comfort from banks. Says consultant Jordan Lewis: "Most banks only want to know what collateral you can offer. They don't want to get involved with long-term issues."

Government is another stumbling block. High interest rates not only make borrowing expensive, they encourage investors who buy government bonds to expect high returns on investments. With the government paying such big interest, it hardly becomes corporations to cry poverty.

But cry poverty they must. Just to remain competitive with its high-tech, low-cost Japanese rival, Caterpillar is investing over \$2 billion in a huge plant-modernization scheme called Plant with a Future. Caterpillar hopes the project will help it cut production time, trim costs and improve quality. The payoff is years away. That has led some investors to denounce the expense for cutting into

dividends, despite the fact that most industry analysts don't think Caterpillar would remain competitive otherwise.

The manufacturer rebellion goes much deeper, though, than continuing to invest even when shareholders and financiers object. There is a growing movement among executives that rejects profit as the measure of a company's health. Instead, these executives would like to invent ways to quantify time-to-market, quality and profits, and they argue that improving all three should be the aim of any business.

Substandard accounting procedures: This argument grows out of a sudden spurt of interest in the way Japanese corporations do business. Typically, Japanese corporations pay more attention to meeting quality goals and expanding market share than realizing immediate profits. If and when the first two objectives are met, the logic goes, the third should follow.

INSIDE STORY

As a result, the big Japanese industrial groups usually have lower profit margins than their American counterparts. They also spend a lot more time and money improving production facilities and upgrading product. The results are evident in vehicle showrooms and consumer-electronics stores nationwide.

The revolt, and it certainly is turning into one, intends to demolish traditional notions of corporate accounting. That means erasing "the bottom line," essentially getting rid of that standard of corporate health—net income—that all income sheets conclude with.

Problem is, corporations don't yet have a system to replace traditional cost-accounting systems. More importantly, financiers don't want them to create one. Those who make their living off the bottom line will do everything in their power to stop companies from finding ways to justify reinvesting more cash in their businesses rather than paying out to them.

As corporate executives move to throw off the onus of Wall Street, they are trying to figure out how to cope with one group of possible allies: their workers. Obviously, labor unions and their members have some interest in promoting quality and reinvestment, if only because they preserve jobs.

Take the United Auto Workers. UAW members at Navistar and John Deere & Co. have taken larger responsibility for ensuring product quality. Navistar workers cooperate with company officials to redesign materials and work processes. Deere line workers now do jobs once performed by inspectors and engineers, maintaining machines and inspecting incoming and outgoing products for defects.

Workers have even taken direct action against raiders. Laborers at motorcycle maker Harley Davidson threatened to walk off the job last year unless a corporate raider withdrew a bid to take over the company. The threat worked.

But companies haven't learned to reciprocate. And given the prevailing distrust executives feel toward workers, they may never. For even while laborers spend more time worrying about quality—and work harder at ensuring it—management isn't compensating for the bigger workload and workers are no more immune to layoffs. The effect is to destroy whatever level of trust many producers have tried to build.

It is akin to the old British problem, perhaps. The Confederation of British Industry routinely denounces the City of London financiers and the labor unions. Meanwhile, financial policies enacted by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher drive British industry into bankruptcy.

Clearly, the insights could engender real change. Industrialists are beginning to take rear-guard action against the financiers. The only question is whether they'll be adroit enough to form the proper alliances to succeed. With folks like former General Motors Chief Executive Roger Smith sitting atop many corporations, you gotta wonder.

Kevin Kelly is a business writer living in Chicago.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©1990 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 15, No. 1) published Nov 7, 1990, for newsstand sales Nov. 7-13, 1990.

By David Moberg

Recession's grim reaper swipes at weakened labor

WHAT WILL THE COMING RECESSION bring for the spare remains of the U.S. labor movement? Government and corporate hostility, reinforced by high unemployment and the twin specters of the new global economy—competition and capital flight—dealt unions a near-mortal blow in the early '80s. Now shrunken and weakened, organized labor is ill-prepared for a potentially disastrous economic slump.

Even the most unreflective union leaders finally recognized in the '80s that labor had its own internal problems. Yet the bureaucratic business, or service, model of unions still reigns: officials act on behalf of a passive membership, negotiating and servicing contracts and possibly plugging for a Democratic candidate around election time.

But there is growing sentiment that this narrow business unionism that delivered economic gains to members in a once-expanding economy is now exhausted. Unions must literally grow—in the scope of their activities as well as membership—or die. Many of the best unions are trying new tactics, revitalizing members and forging broader coalitions. But there is no agreement on the model for the unions of the future.

Unions face two different anti-union corporate challenges. On the one hand, there are such notorious union-busting villains as Frank Lorenzo at Eastern Airlines or the Tribune Company now at New York's *Daily News*. But more insidious are the corporations that practice "human resource management" (as described by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cornell University labor-relations experts Thomas A. Kochan, Harry C. Katz and Robert B. McKersie in *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*, 1986), or "managerialism" (the term preferred by Charles C. Heckscher of Harvard in *The New Unionism*, 1988).

Labor light: This alternative managerial style emphasizes employee involvement and decentralization as opposed to rigid, tightly controlled bureaucracies with autocratic bosses. It not only succeeds in keeping unions out by reducing discontent but typically improves performance as well, especially in technologically advanced businesses that need flexible, innovative workers.

To survive, unions must be able to contend with both styles of management. In an era of U.S. economic decline and global competitive pressures, business unionism doesn't work well with either. In *An Injury to All* (1988), labor journalist Kim Moody makes an impassioned critique of the failures of business unionism. He argues for a renewal of militant social unionism—more democratic unions oriented toward rank-and-file direct action and expressions of solidarity. Moody urges unions to combat management by escalating and spreading conflict while pursuing independent political action.

Although such social unionism is far superior to business unionism and serves as a stirring model for combat, Moody is prone to common romantic assumptions that grass-roots workers are always right and both union leaders and larger organizations are inherently evil. Unions must be prepared—as most currently are not—to wage

struggles like those of the Hormel packing-house workers in Minnesota or the Pittston coal miners.

While such knock-down confrontations are crucial in demonstrating to employers what unions are willing and able to do when necessary, they are not the only appropriate or effective actions and are also unlikely to gain unions a foothold in the new non-union, "managerial" corporations.

Furthermore, the hypermobility of global business sets limits on what workers can do even with heroic efforts. Important as international solidarity could be now, it is utopian to count on it. Low-cost regions of the world offer employers the opportunity to flee the U.S. and increasingly to transfer skilled work. International competition—compounded by U.S. mismanagement—often threatens union jobs.

Moody is right, however, in stressing the untapped potential of workers to resist business attacks, the need for radical democratic transformations of unions and the importance of labor focusing on broad social-political goals.

Co-opting cooperation: This traditional left-wing militant social unionism is often contrasted with various emerging models of labor-management cooperation. Most of these evolved in response to the new, harsher, competitive climate, often as an alternative to wage concessions or job losses.

Debate over whether or not to cooperate is off the mark: workers invariably cooperate with management if they come to work. Even militant unions might "cooperate" with the introduction of advanced technology, then fight over productivity gains, while corrupt unions "cooperate" through anti-worker sweetheart deals.

The ideology of "cooperationism," popular in some business and political circles, is largely a way of winning over workers to management goals, nullifying unions and taking advantage of workers' knowledge for corporate aims, according to Andy Banks and Jack Metzgar, labor educators at Florida

International and Roosevelt universities. Banks and Metzgar argue, in a stimulating issue of *Labor Research Review* (No. 14, 1989), that true participation of workers in management is the key to developing an organizing model of the union of the future.

Worker participation should be seen not as a subversive alternative to collective bargaining, they write, but rather as an extension of union bargaining. Studies show that even if participation schemes keep out unions, workers respond favorably when their unions initiate participation.

Workers often have enough firsthand knowledge to correct their bosses' mismanagement—as vividly described in Ernest D. Lieberman's provocative 1988 book, *Unfit to Manage!*—and save their jobs or factory.

Workers can use the power stemming from their superior understanding of the production process, Banks and Metzgar argue, to organize themselves and solve problems in the workplace for their own ends. They insist that unions must exclude management from shop councils (supervisors now dominate many quality-of-worklife projects). But more important is a clear sense by workers and their union of what they want. This "organizing model" of worker participation must cover major management decisions such as investment, in addition to the usual shop-floor problems. If managers can propose that workers take 50 percent wage cuts to save jobs, then workers should be prepared to propose the same for managers.

Banks' and Metzgar's model, formulated primarily for workplaces where management threatens job loss, assumes workers have valuable knowledge with which to bargain. But unskilled workers may have few chips. Nevertheless, by seeing workers as the agents of change, the "organizing model" offers hope that labor can be rejuvenated by vigorous, self-conscious participation in management. Ultimately all models of participation that imply some worker power run up against one objection: despite elite opinion-makers' critiques of union "adver-

serialism," it is typically management, especially in the U.S., that initially treats workers as adversaries. Strong democratic models of worker participation also must contend with union leaders who fear losing control of their members.

The results of some unions' efforts to use their knowledge to correct mismanagement, save jobs and increase union power are mixed. In *A Fighting Chance: New Strategies to Save Jobs and Reduce Costs* (1988), editors Sally Klingel and Ann Martin of Cornell University bring together reports on three cases of workers saving jobs by proving they could devise measures such as production strategies to make their plants (Xerox, Harrison Radiator and Trico auto parts) more competitive. The discouraging side is that management seemed unwilling to make long-term commitments to the workers, competitive threats were repeatedly renewed, and the unions only reacted to top-level strategic decision-making.

Whatever works: Harvard's Heckscher offers yet another model—"associational unionism." Unions must jettison the bureaucratic model and rely more on decentralized communities of workers that organizationally complement the flexible new managerialism, he argues. By extending workers' rights to speech, information, due process and association within the workplace, Heckscher believes a more flexible, less rule-oriented unionism could develop.

These somewhat vaguely defined "associational unions" could form more allies inside and outside the workplace, he maintains, and focus on resolving problems on the basis of general principles, not combatting over legalisms. Although he acknowledges the strike would remain the final source of clout, his proposed associationalism seems likely to be weak and fragmented, though it may appeal in relatively skilled managerial workplaces now most resistant to unions.

Responding to the challenges of this recession, unions will probably helter-skelter try bits and pieces of all these models, searching for anything that works. Ultimately the long-term importance of competing models is likely to be decided in political and legal arenas, much as New Deal labor legislation locked in place a basic model for more than 50 years.

Labor-law reform could encourage a more robust unionism of whatever model, making it easier to organize, for example. Reform could expand universal employee rights, such as permitting dismissal only with just cause, or mandate new institutions or procedures. This would give employees and unions a chance to bargain over meaningful cost-saving before any plant closing or establish worker-safety committees in all workplaces, for example. It could also expand the scope of legally required subjects for bargaining.

The weakened labor movement will need allies to win any expansion of legal powers. The more it advocates a model that increases democracy, provides rights to all workers and serves the public interest—improving the nation's economic performance by giving workers a voice in management decisions, for example—the better chance it has for victory. The new model may be billed as cooperative to win public support, but the real question will always be: cooperate on whose terms? □



Randy Jones, INX

By Joel Bleifuss

Decade of deceit

Ten years ago this week, the Reagan Revolution began. Behind the props of cue-card homilies and gee-whiz grins, the corporate class and its agents in the newly empowered Republican Party invented a mandate that they marketed through the national media to the American people. They got government off our backs and into their pockets—pockets that soon bulged with the paper profits of a deregulated financial sector.

Money was out there to be had, and the robber barons of the '80s were there to snatch it. Investment bankers and real-estate developers became national cover boys, their deeds and riches laid out in Sunday magazines for all to envy. Going part and parcel with the administration's upward redistribution of wealth was the costliest peacetime military expansion in history. The war industry made record profits, financed by record deficits and record cuts in social programs. The Reagan-Bush administration justified the buildup by inventing foreign villains for all to fear. Terrorist infidels like Muammar Khadafy joined familiar communist bogeymen like Daniel Ortega.

When facts began interfering with official reality, the administration called in reinforcements. CIA propaganda experts who were in the field busy marketing the U.S. nuclear arsenal to recalcitrant NATO members returned to Washington and, aided by ad-men volunteers from the private sector, set up a domestic covert operation. Through the Office of Public Diplomacy, they packaged the administration's goods and sold them to a skeptical public and a pliant Congress. So successful were they at setting the framework of the debate that truth did not matter. Public officials no longer lied—they just misspoke. This farce was sanctioned by reporters and editors who traded in their pens for rubber stamps. The only thing they forfeited was their integrity. Others, however, lost their lives. Salvadorans were tortured then executed, homeless Americans frozen then forgotten.

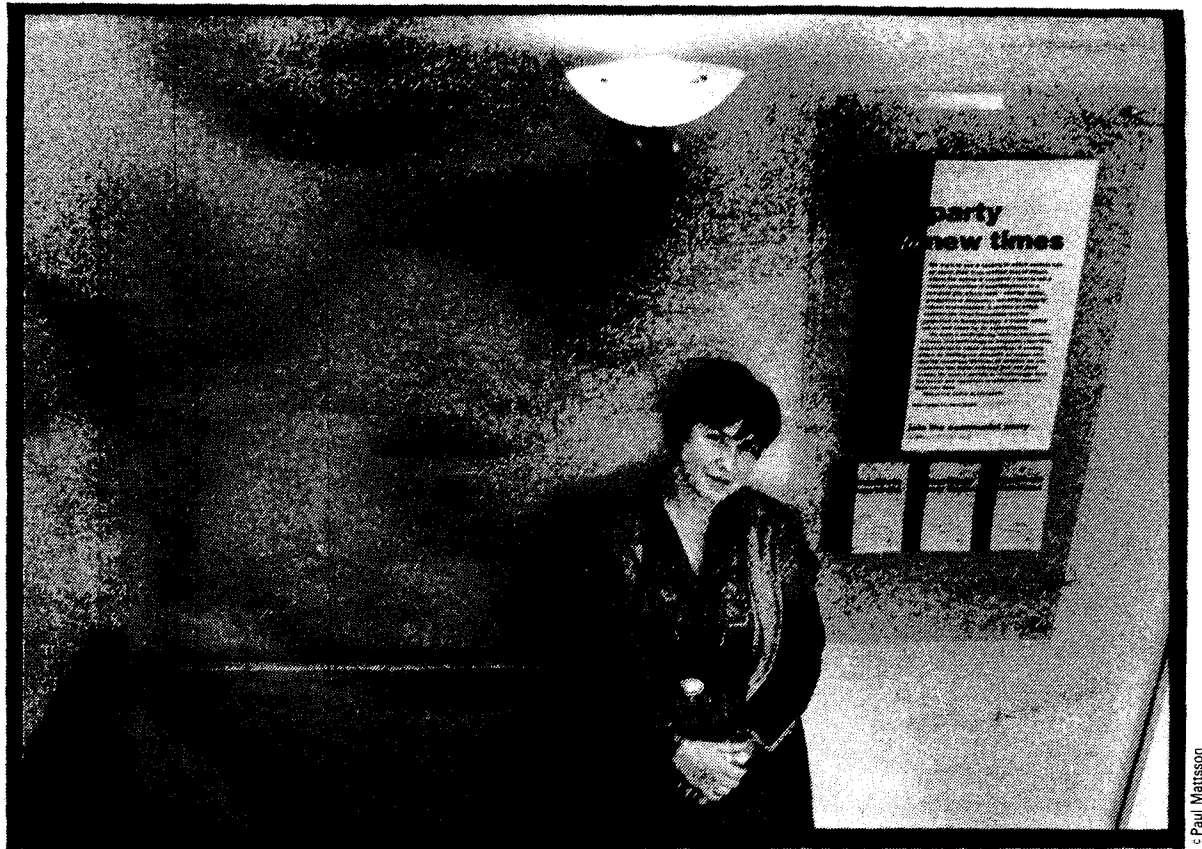
But the Reagan-Bush administration did more than manipulate public perceptions. As was revealed when the Iran-contra scandal unfolded, the White House consistently broke laws then lied about it, broke some more and lied again, all the while hiding behind the veil of national security.

Eight down: So far, eight North network co-conspirators have been convicted of crimes. One person Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh was not able to bring to justice was Joseph Fernandez, the former CIA station chief in Costa Rica who was charged with lying to both the Tower Commission and the CIA inspector general about the administrations' illegal contra-supply operation.

If his case had gone to trial, Fernandez was planning to argue that CIA headquarters had "detailed information about the resupply program and that CIA headquarters urged ... encouragement and assistance to the lethal-aid resupply operation." But in order to use that defense, he would have had to publicly discuss the location of the CIA's Costa Rican command post and why the agency built an airfield in northern Costa Rica. So, on October 12, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, at the behest of the CIA, invoked the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA) and refused to allow the above-mentioned information to be released at the trial—even though it was already public knowledge. Fernandez and, by extension, the CIA were both off the hook.

Walsh was furious. On October 24 he sent a report to the House and Senate intelligence committees that read in part, "The attorney general and the CIA not only frustrated the public development of this proof but did so in a manner that exasperated the district court and dragged out the resolution of this issue in unproductive litigation. ... The administration's actions in *United States vs. Fernandez* and in other Iran-contra prosecutions underscore the need for objective standards to govern the release of classified information in criminal prosecutions. ... This is particularly true when there is an appearance of conflict of interest because the agency refusing disclosure is itself a subject of investigation. ... This lack of objective standards can lead to the frustration of law enforcement."

Walsh-bashing: David MacMichael, a one-time CIA analyst and currently editor of *Unclassified*, the publication of National Security Alumni, writes: "Lawrence E. Walsh to date is the only public figure emerging from the Iran-contra swamp with integrity intact and honor enhanced." MacMichael is perturbed by attacks on Walsh in the press, particularly an October 4 article by the *New York Times* David Johnston, who wrote, "Prosecutions [by the independent counsel] of two more mid-level officials, Mr. Donald Gregg and Mr. Elliot Abrams, may be difficult to justify unless they open new avenues to the contra-aid activities of officials like Mr. Bush or Mr. Reagan. But neither Mr. Gregg nor Mr. Abrams



Nina Temple plans to lead her party out of post-war irrelevance and into new times.

Nina Temple: new time secretary

By Anthony Borden

They say you can't go home again, and for red-diaper-baby Nina Temple, good riddance.

"I was brought up in a council estate in the middle of a very posh part of London," she says. "The estate was built at the height of the post-war socialist euphoria: we're going to have workers in St. John's Wood! And it was called Stalin House. The workers put up signs."

That public-housing flat eased a long transition for the family. Both grandfathers—a Glasgow dockworker and a London ne'er-do-well—spent long spells unemployed in the '30s, while her father was able to build a modest career as a civil servant in the Foreign Office (until he was chased out for standing in a local election as a Communist).

Now, at 33, Temple has completed the trajectory. A professional mother of two, she and her "bloke," a math teacher in a London public school, are reverse class invaders, with a recently purchased home in the poor-yet-gentrifying North London district of Hackney. With her own mortgage, it's a long way from Stalin House. And it is this blurring of class connections that motivates her to transform one more legacy of her fathers' world: the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). In January, Temple was elected general secretary of the CPGB. She is the first woman to hold the position. If she succeeds, she will also be the last—of any gender.

Faced with electoral irrelevance, a dwindling membership of 6,300 and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the party has embarked on a thorough reconsideration of its politics and structure. Proposals on its agenda range from shutting down to establishing a new political party and a parallel progressive forum. If they go the second route, the new name could be anything from the Democratic Communist to the Radical Party (Temple's choice). But for Temple, the central work is to recast the party's politics to accommodate the changing experience of class.

This is a major shift, and it has brought the party intellectual currency if not electoral support. Much remains to be decided at a special party congress in December. To sum up her vision, the general

secretary—like the party's public-relations officer she used to be—employs this snappy phrase: "New Times." The slogan punctuates her conversation and the writing in the party journal, *Marxism Today*. The concept both fuels the CPGB's renewal and reveals the problems with it.

Dustbin-bound? Something had to be done. The honorable history—the great strike of '26, the fight against Franco and Hitler, the wartime peak of 56,000 members and two members of Parliament—faded through the Cold War, even as CPGB charted increasingly independent and democratic politics. The party let Hungary slide, but it broke with Moscow over Czechoslovakia, criticized the Soviets for Afghanistan and Poland and, in the mid-'80s, expelled the hardline editors of its old daily.

But crusty habits, like hand-delivering all party cards (so they couldn't fall into the hands of the state through the mail) stifled members' creativity. The membership aged, and the youth section petered out. Today the party is invisible at public rallies. In the 1987 general elections, its 17 parliamentary candidates won only 6,000 votes. When the party last year called for a broad anti-Thatcher electoral pact, no one noticed. "Impotent" is one of the kinder words members use to describe their own party.

But in the midst of this decay, an odd thing happened: the politics of the CPGB and those of Labour leader Neil Kinnock fell right in line.

"It is a strange situation for the CP in Britain," says Temple, "that many of the things we have been arguing are now becoming quite politically influential at the same time that the party itself, in the last dregs of Stalinism, is in danger of extinction."

The party's current influence, Temple explains, has come through its monthly magazine. Under editor and longtime member Martin Jacques (pronounced Jakes), *Marxism Today* has been drastically refashioned from a political journal into a hip and glossy review of politics and culture. The pages are given over to think pieces by leftist reporters from Fleet Street. Interviews with government and opposition ministers and even a Derbyshire constable mix with profiles of fashion designers. The Marxism has nearly disappeared, and the front-page

tag "Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party" has slipped discreetly inside. Readership has risen to 60,000.

Marxism Today's greatest contribution to British political debate has been its contention that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher represents not just another conservative government but a new, self-contained ideology. *Marxism Today* claims authorship of the term "Thatcherism." This effort to understand the radical Tory mind ultimately gave too much coherence to what some see as a ragtag collection of reactionary policies, as Jacques now admits. By crediting Thatcher with a successful political vision, *Marxism Today* obliged the left to accept some of her terms. Now, in its modest effort "to provide the parameters for a new politics of the left," the magazine has launched the *New Times* project. The idea is to "prise Thatcherism and [the] world apart," and thus understand the new reality that the Tories have been able to exploit.

It is a familiar landscape. The key element, Temple explains, is the economic restructuring that has been driven in the '80s by finance capital and high technology. Modes of production have become more flexible, work groups smaller. The service sector has replaced the blue-collar worker.

But the key change is political. "Workers in the '30s, their experience was very uniform," says Temple. "But now people's experience of their own condition is very diverse. So any notion of collective politics has got to construct a new idea of social solidarity. And class is not adequate to encompass [that]."

The CPGB/*Marxism Today* battle strategy is to seize back from Thatcher the ground of everyday life. "When Thatcher started, the left just resisted," says Temple. "Everything that she did we were against. ... But what we didn't do is recognize that, yes, there were problems in Britain."

Temple recalls the old days at Stalin House. "I can remember as a kid you used to come home and find the front door painted a color that you hadn't asked for, or they dropped a card through your door saying they are going to decorate your flat the next day and you had to spend the night moving everything. It was very paternalist and bureaucratic and not involving people."

The challenge is to come to terms with that grievance, says Temple. "Thatcherism exploited it. She offered more freedom to the individual. And for a lot of people in Britain, Thatcherism has delivered, but at great social cost. There is now a huge difference between the rich and the poor, and people do not think about the nature of society and the quality of life."

The "new" priorities for the left, says Temple, include: democratizing and improving the fragmented work experience, establishing a "progressive consumerism" based on sustainable and green growth, pursuing peace and international cooperation and working for sexual and racial equality. "New Times can be quite a useful political phrase," says Temple. "You have got to re-examine everything you have stood for and have a progressive, socialist message that is relevant to these times, instead of the post-war era."

For Temple, *New Times* are essentially a common sense look at politics as she has lived them—mixed with a healthy seasoning of Antonio Gramsci and the search for a "cultural counter-hegemony."

Neo Times: In the party's new offices, in up-and-coming Islington, an aura of young professionalism pervades: fresh paint, bare wood, wall-to-wall carpet. Upstairs in the small building are the magazine's editors, ad people and, in one room, banks of computers. Speaking plainly and wearing a denim dress, Temple has the calm of a veteran. Concerned about Vietnam, she joined the party at age 13 and has worked as a full-time staffer since college. But she knows she's in a fragile position.

On one side is the *Marxism Today* maverick Jacques. He says, "What really came crashing down [in 1989] is a whole view of world history and revolutionary politics, in terms of 1917 and the Marxist/Communist tradition, and even the meaning and capacity of Marxism." For him, the CPGB is a "must flush." Temple disagrees, and so she will have to distance herself from the magazine while subscribing to most of its ideas.

But not all members toe the new party line. "The only thing [*New Times*] doesn't say it is opposed to is capitalism," snaps Monty Johnstone, a longtime anti-Stalinist. "A Communist Party on that basis has no future, and they should join the Labour Party." His sentiments are vehemently seconded by Beninites and others on the socialist left.

Temple's ideas do begin to sound like those of the rebuilt Labour Party—except that Kinnockites seem to know their politics are all about public relations and electability, while the *New Times* actually believe them.

Thatcher's spreading of "popular wealth"—home-ownership, private pension schemes and consumer durables—may be "enabling," as the Tories claim, but it has not spread real control and power, according to Chris Pond of the independent research group Low Pay Unit. Says Pond, "This issue is really a political one about class identification and how people perceive their position, rather than that it has changed. But it is a difficult one."

Party politicker: For now, Temple worries about keeping the party remnant together. That has meant traveling around the country to encourage the feisty, year-long, intraparty debate that has lead up to the December congress. "People were fairly horrified. 'God! Dropping democratic centralism—we can't do that!' But the conversation has moved on so much now that most of the membership are taking in stride a whole number of reforms that some of us have been fighting for for 20 years."

Splitting the difference between Jacques and Johnstone, Temple has proposed that the party at its December congress both retain a party structure and create a parallel political association to foster contacts with different social movements. Such an association, she explains, would be "very experimental, with different initiatives in different localities. ... There are people in different groups crying out for a chance to come together to develop a socialist perspective." Whatever is decided, Temple knows some members will certainly split.

Temple's unassuming manner helps her calm some of these tensions as she tries to keep the debate in focus. "To me the politics is more important than the form," she says. "We have to evaluate what in our tradition is important and ought to continue, and what is totally discredited. You can't fudge those two things. But there is enough here [in the CPGB] that is distinctive, and I think it's worth having a go."

Meanwhile, she enjoys at least one perk of being national secretary. With a four-year-old girl in a day school and a two-year-old boy in a nursery, Temple now finds it easier to make time for the regular emergencies of motherhood. "[Previous General Secretary] Gordon McLennan just didn't understand if I couldn't show up somewhere because one of the children was sick," she says. Despite the ongoing debate, Temple keeps her job in perspective. She took her standard vacation this August, a month in Ireland with her husband and the kids. "Some people think that was daft," she says. "But you have to live."

As for her future in the party—whatever its name? "I wouldn't do it all my life—not as long as my predecessor or his predecessor or his predecessor: 23, 19 and 15 years." With odd cheer, Temple adds, "I could be gone by December." □

Anthony Borden is a London-based writer.

seem likely to shed further light on the involvement of their superiors. And no evidence has ever been produced at any of the inquiries to contradict the assertions of Mr. Reagan and Mr. Bush that they had only a scanty knowledge of the operation to aid the Nicaraguan rebels."

According to MacMichael, Johnston admitted during a phone conversation that his assumption that Walsh's purpose was to incriminate Reagan or Bush through trials of subordinates was based only on supposition. Further, Johnston could not defend his statement that "no evidence" showed Bush or Reagan aware of the contra-aid operation.

Meanwhile in Florida: Another person concerned about prosecutions in the Iran-contra scandal is Bob Fletcher, the Democratic congressional candidate for Florida's 5th District. (See "The First Stone," October 31.) In July, a federal appeals court in Washington ordered a review of the Oliver North case to determine whether his guilty verdict was influenced by testimony to the Iran-contra committee for which he had been granted immunity. Fletcher sent out a press release that said in part, "A grave conflict of interest may exist in the federal appeals panel decision on Ollie North's case. According to previously published information and per the statements enclosed, a key character in the three-judge decision, Laurence H. Silberman, has been a longtime CIA agent."

Silberman, a Reagan-appointed federal judge, was one of three 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign officials who met in early October 1980 in Washington with a man who said he represented the Iranian government. According to a 1986 report in the *Miami Herald*, the man proposed to Reagan-Bush campaign aides Richard Allen, Robert McFarlane and Silberman that Iran release the hostages to Reagan, not Carter, to "ensure President Carter's defeat in the November 1980 election."

Housang Lavi, an Iran-born arms merchant with U.S. citizenship, says he was the unidentified man who attended that meeting at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel. Lavi claims to have been in contact with both the Carter State Department and the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign.

According to letters released by the CIA and the State Department under a Freedom of Information Act request, Lavi was indeed trying to arrange an arms-for-hostages deal with the Carter administration. In an Oct. 9, 1980 letter labeled "Secret Eyes Only," Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders wrote Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher about the proposed deal. "The proposal as originally presented was the following scenario: The U.S. would agree that it is prepared to provide the spares [parts] listed. The U.S. would respond to Khomeini's demands—minus any commitment on returning the shah's assets, which Lavi said Khomeini now understands are impossible to locate. The spares would then be put in an aircraft with Iranian markings and would be flown to a field in Iran with Mr. Lavi and two of his Iranian contacts aboard. The hostages would be assembled at the field to return on the same aircraft." Lavi says he does not know why the Carter administration rejected his proposal.

As for Lavi's meetings with the members of the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign, the three Republican participants say they have forgotten the name of the man they met. But in a yet-unreleased interview with documentary filmmaker Barbara Trent, Lavi recalled the meeting this way: "I did talk to Mr. James Baker III on a number of occasions. And I do recall that he referred me to Laurence Silberman, Richard Allen and Robert McFarlane. We had a meeting in Washington. I believe it was Oct. 2, 1980." Lavi added, "I knew Silberman from a previous covert operation, when he was a member of the CIA. He took some Phoenix missiles on the F-14s—which, incidentally, I had sold to the shah back in 1973—out of Iran. ... That was back in 1978." He continued with the story of the meeting, "I proposed to them, exactly as I had proposed to the Carter administration, that if there is any way that the Iranians could be satisfied with \$40 million of only spare parts—which [Iran] had already paid for—the hostages would be released. ... To the best of my recollection, and as I understood from McFarlane at the time, there were [already] negotiations to make a deal with the Iranians. ... I was told [by the three campaign aides that] they were already in touch with the Iranians themselves."

Lavi said he has never understood why the hostages were held until minutes after Reagan was inaugurated president on Jan. 20, 1980. "I don't understand why these hostages were kept for 76 more days. There were some deals, yes, that's correct, but 76 days [after the 1980 election], I could never understand why."

Ten years later it is the enemy Iraq that is holding our hostages. As *In These Times* goes to press, the mid-term election is just days away. One can't help but wonder if the White House has a surprise in store. Anything is possible—except the truth.

Big bathroom Brother

The sheriff's office in Carson City, Nev., has filled its round-up quota for a while. Seventeen men were arrested last month after secret surveillance cameras in two city park bathrooms filmed them in acts of "mutual and public masturbation, oral copulation, voyeurism, indecent exposure and open and gross lewdness." After monitoring the cameras from a nearby van, police used license plate numbers to trace the suspects, many of whom were arrested at their homes and businesses. A surprising number of Carson City residents are protesting the dragnet, accusing the police of manufacturing victims from a victimless crime and denouncing the *Nevada Appeal* newspaper's decision to publish the names and addresses of those arrested.

What's in a name?

"They'll never see you coming" is the motto. Stealth Condoms is the product. And Northrop Corporation, producer of the B-2 Stealth bomber, is not amused. In fact, Northrop is opposing the company—Stealth Condoms Inc.—in its application for a trademark on the grounds that it is likely to "confuse or deceive" the American consumer. Do the bomb-shaped package and the red, white and blue condoms send the message that the military endorses sexual intercourse? Will the public think the U.S. has devoted bomber funding to the contraception industry? Founder John Hughes and his staff of "Stealth test pilots" think not. "We offer a heck of a lot more protection than the Stealth bomber," Hughes says, "at a lot less cost."

Bad boys finish last

In the midst of heat surrounding various charges of sexual impropriety, Minnesota Republican gubernatorial nominee Jon Gruneth has gotten out of the electoral kitchen. Gruneth resigned his candidacy Oct. 29, citing the strain of a widening sexual scandal involving a nude pool party (see *In These Times*, Oct. 31). Gruneth will be replaced on the ballot by State Auditor Arne Carlson, who finished second in the September primary. Current polls favor Carlson, whose pro-choice stance is anathema to party leadership, over three-term, anti-abortion Democratic Gov. Rudy Perpich.

South Africa now and then

It seems that too much political light makes the public go blind. Los Angeles public television station KCET will no longer carry the series "South Africa Now" because station officials say the show is "biased" in favor of the African National Congress. The decision last month marks a victory for the conservative Committee on Media Integrity, which threatened legal action against KCET for airing "South Africa Now"—produced by Globalvision, Inc.—and other programs with a "leftist bias." African-American community leaders in Southern California are waging a campaign to reinstate the program, and Los Angeles City Councilman Robert Farrell says he may ask the council to withhold funding for the station next year.

Let your conscience be your guide

Proponents of the Fully Informed Jury Amendment (FIJA) want all potential jurors to know they have the right to vote according to their consciences. Jurors are continually and deliberately misinformed by judges who direct them to "consider only the facts" of a case and to "accept the law" as dictated by the court, say members of the national lobbying organization. John Adams once said of the juror, "It is not only his right but his duty... to find the verdict according to his own best understanding, judgment and conscience, though in direct opposition to the direction of the court." That sentiment fell by the wayside in 1895 when the U.S. Supreme Court gave judges the power to decide whether jurors should be fully informed of their rights. Since then, FIJA says, most judges have since decided against touting the conscience clause. For more information on the amendment, call (406) 793-5550.

Please send timely news about local activities, follow-ups on stories we've run or other interesting bits of information—including your address and phone number—to Kira Jones, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

INSHORT



Detroit plays beat the devil

DETROIT—For Halloween this year, Detroit again went as an inferno. Sirens screamed, trucks raced through red lights and virtually every committed fire chaser got to gawk at one sensational blaze.

Each October 29-31, Detroit tries to burn itself down before an audience of hundreds of fans armed with police scanners who race from fire to fire cheering the flames alongside local, national and international news people eager to document the carnage. This annual rite is known as "Devil's Night."

Devil's Night is Detroit's version of "Mischief Night," the evening before Halloween normally reserved for petty vandalism. In 1983, however, the city inexplicably erupted into an orgy of arson. The following year the festivities expanded from one night to three and scorched Detroit with 810 fires—a Devil's Night record. Smoke hovered over the city for days, and a genuine civic tradition was born—not to mention a

spectator sport.

Devil's Night 1990 blazed to an early start. At 5:35 p.m., just after sundown, the target was an abandoned chemical plant in central Detroit. Exploding wood pellets sent flames skyward, but no one was overly impressed. A police officer even advised a foreign cameraman not to waste his tape on a "middle-level" fire, assuring him that more visual blazes would follow.

The night's most sensational fire occurred about two hours later. It was a two-alarm blaze that started in an abandoned fast-food restaurant and jumped to the New Galilee Spiritual Church. As fire fighters battled the blaze, parishoners braved the thick smoke hoping to salvage an organ and other relics.

There were other big blazes and hundreds of calls that kept fire fighters racing all over the city. Most local experts, however, believed this year's Devil's Night was among the quietest. They also believed that many of the fires had been set not by vandals but by arsonists-for-profit who since 1984 have camouflaged their work in the annual bonfire.

Precisely what sparked the first 1983 blaze is not clear, but the motivation is. Celebrated the traditional way, Halloween features kids threatening "tricks" unless pacified by "treats." So it also goes in Detroit—only Motown's a bit empty on treats.

A black male living in this city runs a greater risk of being killed than an American soldier did during World War II. Seventy percent of the children who enter first grade won't graduate from high school. Downtown is a ghost town, one-third of the population has fled since 1967, the auto industry has floundered and last year the *Detroit Free Press* counted more than 15,000 abandoned buildings lining the streets.

Since 1985, city officials have tried to fight fire with fire, turning Detroit during the Halloween period into a city under siege—dusk-to-dawn curfews for those under 18, virtually every city vehicle combing the streets and battalions of neighborhood patrols that swelled to 35,000 this year. Six thousand abandoned buildings—arsonists' targets of choice—have been torn down since 1989.

The city also launched a public-relations campaign called "My Heart is With You Detroit." In a bizarre ceremony a few days before Devil's Night, \$300 savings bonds were presented to the elementary, junior high and high school students who most eloquently described why not to torch their city.

The measures have effectively cut fires by 78 percent since 1984, and despite fine weather and a new book about Detroit that has angered the city, officials were fairly optimistic that a downward trend would continue.

"The worst is over. It'll be quiet," predicted a member of the police special tactical unit as he hit his Devil's Night beat, a rifle slung over each shoulder. His partner carried a fire extinguisher. The K-9 corps barked ferociously behind him. "Just precautionary," he said.

The number of arrests for violating curfew dropped significantly this year, areas with strong neighborhood patrols reported few problems and the city generally congratulated itself for exorcising the devil. Only one area—the lower east side—had been hit particularly hard with a flurry of fires, including nine in a 30-minute period, that destroyed both abandoned and occupied homes.

The next morning, it was difficult to distinguish buildings abandoned from buildings occupied, and buildings torched the night before from buildings burned in past years. And while one would expect to see fire victims bitter and baffled by the senseless destruction, there was no one on the streets. No victims, no cleanup efforts, no city officials.

The devil had come, dealt his annual doom and left. And Detroit didn't look any different than it had the day before. —Matthew Maranz

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

WHEN JESSE JACKSON MOVED FROM Chicago to Washington, D.C., last year, no group was happier than the Cook County Democratic Party here. And why not? For more than two decades, Jackson was among the local party's most persistent and effective critics. From his platform as leader of Operation PUSH—a civil-rights organization he founded and headquartered on the city's South Side—the charismatic reverend was able to marshal wide coverage for his attacks on the political status quo.

But today, barely a year after toasting Jackson's departure, Cook County Democrats desperately want him back. Party leaders need his persuasive powers to help quell an incipient political rebellion mobilized by the independent, all-black Harold Washington Party (HWP), named after Chicago's late, sainted black mayor. Fresh from a highly publicized victory in the U.S. Supreme Court, in which two local judicial rulings were overturned to allow the HWP on the ballot in time for the November 6 election, the upstart group is gaining popular appeal in the city's African-American community.

"We hope Rev. Jackson will find time in his busy schedule to help us out a little bit," said one aide to Illinois Democratic gubernatorial candidate Neil Hartigan. "We have to find a way to counter the emotional impact of the Harold Washington Party. Right now, they have the image of 'David' vs. the 'Goliath' of the Democratic Party. We have to change that."

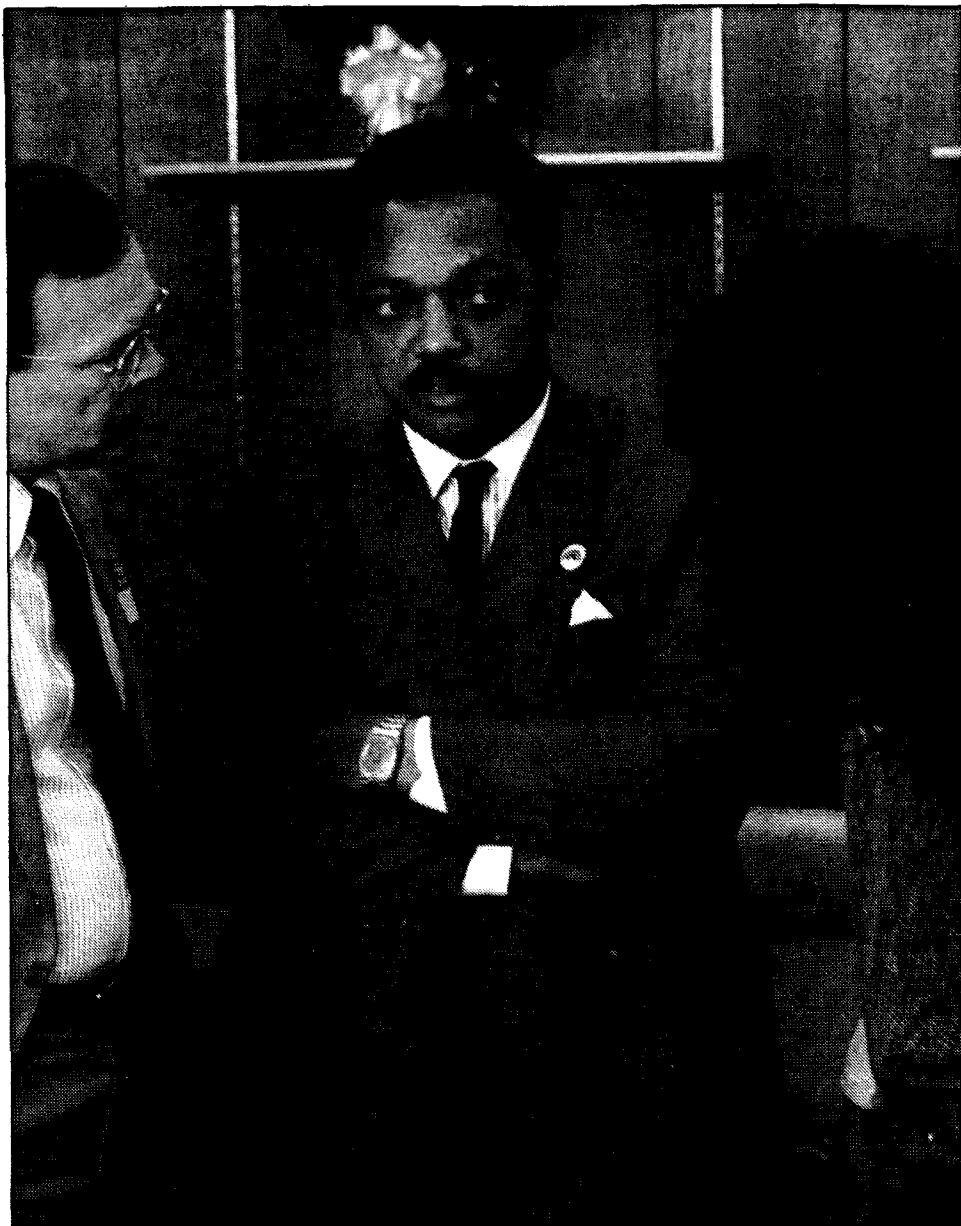
Left by the movement: Hartigan is running neck and neck with Republican Secretary of State Jim Edgar, and most pundits predict the black vote will make the difference. Hartigan also is the Democratic leader who in 1987 backed a mostly-white independent Chicago First party rather than official Democratic candidate Harold Washington. Although no HWP candidate is running for governor, leaders of the new party have targeted Hartigan for defeat.

That Jackson could be so appealing to Hartigan's forces is a vivid illustration of how rapidly political contexts can change. It's also an indication of how the president of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) is being left behind by the movement he inspired. Independent political parties are popping up across the country (see *In These Times*, Sept. 25). As African-Americans grow increasingly dissatisfied with their political marginalization, many organizers are pushing independent options.

Jackson is not yet ready to jump ship. He remains convinced that the Democratic Party is open to a takeover by progressive forces. Many of his former followers no longer share that conviction.

The NRC theoretically was created to harness the energy generated by Jackson's first presidential campaigns and use it to fuel a progressive political movement. But several attempts to institutionalize the group have ended in failure. Many organizers now consider the NRC nothing more than a vehicle for Jackson's political aggrandizement. What's worse, they charge it's being used to corral the electorate's independent spirit within the confines of the Democratic Party.

From Jackson's perspective, things look different. His eyes are focused particularly on the redistricting struggles that will erupt



Jackson remains convinced the Democratic Party is open to a takeover by progressive forces.

Contexts can change, but Jesse's still a Democrat

once the final results of the 1990 U.S. census are announced. Black independent campaigns invariably will siphon votes from Democratic candidates and put Republicans in office, he explains. This will allow the GOP to influence legislative remapping and, in effect, disenfranchise black voters by diluting their electoral concentrations. This is but one of many reasons Jackson cites for African-Americans to support the Democratic Party.

Left-wing Democrat: And so it has come to pass that Jesse Jackson has found common cause with a political machine he once denounced as the virtual embodiment of evil. While many former Jackson admirers find that hard to believe, they should not be surprised by his actions. Jackson never disguised his intention to work within the Democratic Party. That intraparty strategy is enunciated in the NRC's founding statement.

"Jackson clearly represents the left wing of the Democratic Party," explains Ron Walters, professor of political science at Howard University in Washington, D.C. "He's both comfortable and effective there." And although he has never been disingenuous about his political allegiances, Jackson's powerful critique of the status quo suggested, for many, a more radical agenda.

"I don't understand why people are surprised at what Jesse is doing," notes Lu Palmer, a longtime community organizer and

chairman of the Black Independent Political Organization (BIPO). "Just like Harold Washington was, Jesse is a Democrat. That's it, plain and simple." Palmer was one of the late mayor's few black dissenters. "I accused

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him of blowing an opportunity to make a real difference in the city's black community. He was too concerned about coalitions to be really effective."

Despite Palmer's hard, black-nationalist line, he supported Jackson's pathbreaking political campaigns. "Jesse's such a masterful media manipulator and he's so good at getting important issues on the front burner, I just have to give it to him."

Shadow senator: These days, the NRC is busy mobilizing residents of Washington, D.C. to elect Jackson as "shadow" senator. This unofficial position would allow him to lobby more effectively for District of Colum-

That Jackson could be so appealing to Hartigan's forces is an illustration of how rapidly political contexts can change.

bia statehood—his current preoccupation.

"Fighting for D.C. statehood may have some poignant symbolic value to many African-Americans and it is certainly important for those D.C. citizens who are disenfranchised, but it shouldn't be the entire focus of the NRC's activity," complains one founding member of the group who lives in Vermont and prefers anonymity. "Why should the entire organization be subordinated to the whims of Jesse Jackson?"

That's nothing new, of course. All of Jackson's organizational entanglements—from Operation Breadbasket to Operation PUSH to the NRC—were overshadowed by their founder's powerful persona. His interests and various energies are difficult to contain under one rubric. That disparate, interdisciplinary sensibility is, in fact, the basis of Jackson's particular genius. His ability to confound categories is, much like the soloist in a jazz aggregation, creatively carving new possibilities out of a hard reality.

A valuable resource: Because of this, Jackson is one of this country's most valuable resources. His talent in crafting raprochement is considerable, but his personal, improvisational method is so alien to standard operating procedure that Jackson is refused recognition. He accomplished a diplomatic tour de force during his recent visit to Kuwait and Iraq, but only the *New Yorker* saw fit to record his noteworthy deeds. Most of the mainstream media instead were preoccupied with Jackson's impudent violation of categorical lines between journalist, diplomat, politician and preacher. That criticism is akin to condemning John Coltrane for neglecting the melody.

In addition, his newest endeavor, *The Jesse Jackson Show*, illustrates how difficult it is for him to retain credibility while assuming the categorical guise of talk-show host. In the show's first few broadcasts, Jackson appeared stiff, ill at ease and, well, phony. Although the subject matter of the nationally syndicated television show generally has been first-rate, its presentation has left much to be desired. The conventions of a media talk show demand that Jackson come across as an earnest inquisitor rather than an engaged strategist. This limitation not only constricts the show's spirit, it also squanders an opportunity to use Jackson for something truly torchbearing.

As Jackson continues adjusting his sights, the independent political spirit liberated by his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns continues to spread. If Jackson gets too far behind this impulse for political independence, he is likely to lose much of his considerable influence. He therefore must choose his battles well. Even in Cook County, Ill., Jackson does not explicitly challenge the HWP candidates.

"Jesse's legitimacy and strength rest with his ability to attract black voters," explains Walters. "If he somehow lost that ability or became known as a political Uncle Tom of some sort, he would lose much of his credibility and access to media."

While some would welcome a media moratorium on Jackson, it is clear that his absence would accelerate the ongoing marginalization of African-Americans. Moreover, Jackson's call for a Rainbow Coalition is an important reminder to those seeking increasingly nationalist solutions: that coalition politics is the only solution that can work.

Goodbye to all that: a look at the last decade as fact and fiction



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

WE DIVIDE OUR POLITICAL LIFE INTO decades, but the chronological distinctions are not literal. There was a '20s, a '30s, a '50s and a '60s, but not a '40s or a '70s. And many of these political decades began earlier or went beyond their chronological limits.

The '20s began in 1919 and crashed in 1929; the '60s probably began with the 1957 Montgomery bus boycott and didn't peter out until after Watergate. Each of these periods represented a distinct state of mind that dominated politics and popular culture. Each had an underlying project or agenda, although it is difficult to say exactly what it was. And each has left a distinct legacy.

What, then, about the '80s—by all odds, a political decade that historians will rank in importance with the '30s and the '60s? What was its defining mood and agenda, and, especially, what is its legacy?

The '80s began as a reaction to the anti-war and civil-rights movements of the '60s, to the counterculture and women's movement, the slowdown of the economy and the humiliation of the U.S. overseas. The reaction was fundamentally conservative, rooted in a kind of imperial nostalgia—a sense that the U.S., once the unchallenged leader of world capitalism, was in decline, and that to halt, if not reverse, that decline, it was necessary to go back to what had worked in the past, ranging from free-market individualism and the virtue of the Founding Fathers to Cold War preparedness and the sexual mores of Muncie. If its political expression was Reagan conservatism, then its cultural expression was the harebrained optimism of movies like *Back to the Future* and *Peggy Sue Got Married*.

Free-floating anxiety

In politics, the conservative reaction first emerged in Barry Goldwater's 1964 and George Wallace's 1968 presidential campaigns and was a prime factor in Richard Nixon's victories in 1968 and 1972. Its political success depended on conservatives' ability to forge a majority coalition of Republicans and erstwhile Democrats. In 1969, Kevin Phillips, writing in *The Emerging Republican Majority*, described just such a coalition, based on traditional business and upper-class concerns about taxes and government regulation and growing middle-class resentment of minority demands and fears of minority crime and rising welfare costs.

In the next decade, the reaction broadened to include new causes and groups while retaining the old. Evangelical Protestants, traditionally apolitical, began organizing against what they saw as the threat to the family posed by the women's and gay rights movements. As the economy stagnated—wages failed to increase, while prices and taxes went up—the middle class clamored for tax and spending reductions. Both groups blamed their plight on the excesses of the '60s.

In addition, Americans suffered through a succession of defeats and humiliations overseas—from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf to Teheran—and the growing challenge to U.S. economic supremacy from Japan and Western Europe. By the late '70s, Americans were afflicted with a free-floating anxiety about their future: wherever they looked, America seemed to be on the skids.

Evil empire

Although a '50s conservative, Reagan came closer than any other politician to articulat-

ing, while at the same time explaining away, Americans' anxieties. A former Democrat who had become a conservative during the McCarthy period, Reagan was first and foremost an anti-communist, and his conservatism was grounded in his fear and hatred of the "evil empire." When Reagan concerned himself with U.S. decline, it was primarily in relation to the Soviet Union.

Reagan never accepted the fact that America's economic decline was something other than temporary. Instead, he insisted that the economy could easily be revived by applying the ancient wisdom of the free-market. Reagan adopted the supply-side doctrines being promulgated by then-Republican Rep. Jack Kemp of New York and a host of neoconservatives. According to this view, Republicans could advocate tax cuts without incurring greater budget deficits; they could be the party of growth rather than austerity.

Reagan's message in 1980 was that the U.S. had declined but that the slide could quickly be reversed. First, the U.S. had to forgo arms negotiations and expand military spending to meet the Soviet threat, and, second, it had to cut taxes and regulation to allow business to expand and grow. By 1984, when the U.S. had begun to pull out of the recession and had clearly surpassed the Soviet Union in military might, Reagan declared that a "new morning" was upon us.

Rich get richer

Ironically, Reagan's first term was largely a continuation—rather than a repudiation—of Carter's last two years. By 1978, the conservative coalition uniting the middle class and the business community had already taken control of the government. It transformed Carter's tax-reform plan into a capital-gains cut for the wealthy, it defeated labor-law reform and the proposal for a consumer-protection agency, and it began deregulating the savings and loan industry.

The policy hawks and the Pentagon lobbyists who manipulated the public's worries about decline for their own ends were also in command. They convinced Carter to shelve the SALT II treaty and to propose military spending hikes that roughly conformed to those Reagan would advance in 1981.

During his first term, Reagan substantially cut taxes for the business community as well as the middle and upper classes. He also slowed non-discretionary social spending—gutting urban-development aid and trimming or eliminating programs left over from Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. Reagan impeded federal regulation, both by starving agencies and by appointing administrators who were hostile to their purposes. Reagan also forced labor unions onto the defensive, busting the air-traffic controllers' union and appointing anti-labor judges to the National Labor Relations Board. From 1977 to 1987, the percentage of unionized workers fell from 23.8 to 17 percent—testimony in part to the success of Reagan's pro-business policies.

The result of Reagan's economic policies, taken together, was to reinforce an already-existing post-industrial shift in wealth—from the poor to the middle class and the wealthy, and from unskilled workers to skilled workers, professionals and business executives. From 1979 to 1988, real family income of the lowest fifth of Americans declined by 4.5 percent, while the income of the middle fifth increased 3.1 percent, the second-highest fifth increased 7.6 percent and the top fifth 14 percent. This created a surplus of disposable wealth and strengthened the appeal of Reagan's supply-side politics. But it didn't

strengthen the economy.

The collapse of Communism

The Reagan administration's most notable achievements were in foreign policy. His increases in military spending; his grandiose plans for a Strategic Defense Initiative; his unwillingness to sign an arms-control treaty with the Soviet Union; his subsidizing anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan (which the Carter administration had begun), and his funding of movements against Soviet allies in Africa, Southeast Asia and Central America helped convince a new generation of Soviet leaders that it was futile to engage in military competition with the U.S. The Soviet empire would have collapsed anyway and Marxism-Leninism eventually would have been discredited, but Reagan's militant anti-communism undoubtedly hastened the fall.

Yet Reagan, and the nation, paid a significant price for these achievements. Increases in military spending contributed to fiscal insolvency. And more important, the entire enterprise of meeting the Soviet threat diverted attention from the deeper threat facing the U.S.: the decline of its industry and cities. These proceeded apace during the Reagan era.

Who won the Cold War?

During the '80s, American industry continued to lose ground to Japan and West Germany. From 1980 to 1988, the U.S. share of world exports in automobiles dropped 46 percent, computers 36 percent, microelectronics 26 percent, and machine tools 17 percent. In 1980 the U.S. controlled 60 percent of the world market in semiconductors; by 1988, it controlled 38 percent and the Japanese 50 percent. By the decade's end, even after the dollar had been devalued, the U.S. was still running \$150 billion annual trade deficits. To paraphrase political scientist Chalmers Johnson: the Soviet Union lost the Cold War but someone other than the U.S. won it.

U.S. decline in major world industries caused the U.S. standard of living to sink as American workers got stuck with the less-productive and lower-paying jobs within the international division of labor. If this decline continues, America will have the same economic relation to Japan and the new Germany that Britain or even Brazil presently has to the U.S. And the U.S. will become like Manhattan writ large, divided between a wealthy, parasitic banking class beholden to foreign capital, and an increasingly unemployed and unemployable underclass.

This decline would have occurred no matter who won the elections in 1980 and 1984. It was based less on immediate policies than on broader structural factors. As manufacturing and services required greater education and teamwork, U.S. industry was hampered by frayed relations between capital and labor and by a deteriorating educational system.

As microelectronic-era manufacturing required greater capital and better long-term planning, the U.S. was at a disadvantage because of the historic antagonism between industry and government. Japan and Western Europe used government-industry consortia to pull even with or ahead of the U.S. in chip manufacturing, high-speed rail, and even commercial aircraft.

And the U.S. was hamstrung by its own role as leader of world capitalism. In this position, the U.S. incurred military and economic obligations that forced it to divert scarce fiscal and scientific resources to the military and to adhere to the canons of free trade even while other countries ignored

them. Japan's meteoric rise from 1965 to 1971 was largely due to demand created by the Vietnam War and to its protectionist trade and industrial strategies.

Yet there is no question that the policies of the '80s and the conservative reaction—the hostility toward government regulation and labor, the neglect of the human and physical infrastructure, the increase in military spending and the refusal to protect vital American industries—reinforced these structural causes of economic decline.

In his book *Trading Places*, former Reagan administration Commerce Department official Clyde Prestowitz offers eloquent testimony of how the Reagan administration's blind adherence to free trade allowed the U.S. semiconductor industry—perhaps the most important industry of the 21st century—to be gutted by the Japanese "dumping"

As president, Ronald Reagan never accepted the fact that America's economic decline was something other than temporary. Instead, he insisted that the economy could easily be revived by applying the ancient wisdom of the free market.

chips at below cost in the U.S. market. But of course, the Carter administration would have probably done the same thing.

Carter, however, would not have destroyed the American solar-power industry. In 1978, the Carter administration, with broad industry support, started a program in the Department of Energy to develop a low-cost process for manufacturing photovoltaic cells. A homeowner tax deduction for solar panels was also included in that year's energy bill. By 1981, when the Reagan administration took office, the U.S. was well ahead of Europe and Japan in developing solar energy.

The Reagan administration soon fixed that. As Ira Magaziner and Mark Patinkin detail in *The Silent War*, while Japan doubled its government solar budget, Reagan cut the U.S. solar budget by more than half and eliminated the homeowner deduction. These measures put the industry's future in doubt by derailing a set of industry initiatives that depended on government support. In 1983, the U.S. exported 60 percent of the world's solar cells while Japan shipped 23 percent. By 1986, Japan was shipping 49 percent and the U.S. 27 percent. As the world enters a new oil crisis, Japan is far better prepared to cope with it than the U.S. And in the 21st century, when the sun begins to supplant oil, Japan, rather than the U.S., will be well ahead of the field.

Waste and corruption

The Reagan administration's attempt to get government off the backs of U.S. citizens by cutting taxes and regulation actually accelerated U.S. economic decline. By accentuating through tax breaks corporations' shortsighted decisionmaking and by removing restrictions on savings and loans, Reagan courted disaster. The surplus of capital created by the administration's tax policies

flowed not toward productive investment but toward mergers and acquisitions, real-estate and stock speculation and white-collar crime.

Reagan's fiscal policies, combined with increases in military spending, also contributed to massive budget deficits that crippled the federal government. The government is now in a Catch-22. If it cuts the deficit by raising taxes or reducing spending, it will reduce consumer demand and possibly precipitate a recession. If it allows the deficit to mount, it could bring on a recession by forcing the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates. And if a recession does come, then the deficits will impose severe limitations on any recovery strategy.

Reagan also failed to follow through on his own war against government waste. Because of increases in transfer payments and military spending, the size of government did not shrink but actually expanded during the Reagan years. He failed to keep his promise to abolish the Energy and Education departments and in his last year set up the Veterans Administration as a new, and unnecessary, Cabinet department. Rather than paring down the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Reagan's appointees turned it into a source of patronage and payoffs for campaign contributors. And the Pentagon became a veritable cesspool of waste and corruption.

In U.S.-Soviet relations, Reagan succeeded as defined by his own objectives, but in all other areas he failed abysmally. By the late '80s, scandals in HUD and on Wall Street had revealed the seamy side of Reaganism, embarrassing even the president's most ardent supporters. The budget crisis had laid bare the pitfalls of his supply-side strategy. And the growing U.S. dependence on foreign capital to finance its deficit and to run its factories revealed how little had really been accomplished during the Reagan years.

The lack of liberal alternatives

There is little evidence that the liberals who challenged Reagan would have fared any better. While Reagan and conservatives were acknowledging real problems—even if they sometimes exaggerated them—Carter and Democratic liberals, many of whom would back Sen. Edward Kennedy in 1980, were largely ignoring them.

The conservative diagnosis of the late '70s was correct. By the late '70s, the U.S. economy had run aground, and the traditional liberal bromides had failed to halt the combination of unemployment and inflation. The federal government had become unwieldy. Carter had embarked upon programs—like the Energy Department's synfuels project—that made little economic sense, while some of Kennedy's programs, like the privately insured national health program, made even less sense.

In addition, liberal jurists and social engineers had pressed solutions to racial inequality—busing, for instance—that in the end pitted blacks against white workers, who felt they were being forced to pay for the sins of someone else's forefathers. White reaction to these programs, whether in South Boston or Davis, Calif., could not simply be dismissed as racism.

If Reagan's conservatism had exhausted its capital by the mid-'80s, Democratic liberalism had done so at least a decade earlier. Its presidential candidates in 1984 and 1988 were parodies of past Democratic failures. And liberals' differences over trade and industrial policy, taxes and state spending

bespoke a paralysis even more profound than that which affected conservatives in the late '80s.

Bush in the '90s

As we enter the '90s, some of the spirit of the '80s is still with us, but Reagan conservatism is not. It perished along with the Cold War upon which it was based, and it was interred during the 1990 budget crisis. Nothing really has replaced it. Middle-class Americans are still anxious about economic decline, taxes, crime, governmental waste and "racial quotas," but they no longer know whether to look backward or forward for solutions. Beneath the current cynicism about government lies a kind of political exhaustion.

George Bush has an enormous opportunity to take the country out of the '80s—into a new era when Americans can confront their failings directly, without sentimentality and nostalgia, and seek solutions in the materials of the present rather than in the vanished verities of the past. But is he up to the challenge?

Probably not. Bush is a political klutz, as the budget crisis revealed, and he has even less understanding of economics than Reagan. He doesn't believe that the nation's industry is in trouble. Where Reagan supported some government efforts at industrial revival on Cold War grounds, Bush believes there is no reason to worry about the American television or semiconductor industry. Bush has abandoned the illusions of Reagan's frontier economics—the romance of the market—but, epitomized in his drive for capital gains cuts, he has substituted the traditional Republican commitment to the wealthy and to big business. If Reagan was Calvin Coolidge, Bush is Gerald Ford.

Bush's foreign policy has been more promising. From his first day in office, he has recognized that the Cold War is over. By abandoning support for a contra military victory, Bush and Secretary of State James Baker helped arrange a peaceful settlement of the Nicaraguan conflict. Bush has consistently backed Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's courageous efforts at reform at home and "new thinking" abroad, resisting Democratic and conservative calls for the U.S. to recognize Lithuanian independence.

But Bush's real challenge is to break with Americans' own nostalgia about the country's military superiority—to make Americans recognize that to halt U.S. economic decline, they must accept a lesser position as a world power. This entails replacing, where possible, unilateral with multilateral action and subordinating American aims to those of the United Nations and other international bodies.

Bush has been slow to understand this, but he has shown a glimmer in the way he has handled the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait. In creating a coalition to confront Saddam Hussein, Bush and Baker have taken an important step away from the illusion of American omnipotence. Now they are at a crossroads where they have to define America's broader objectives, and the way they do it will set the tone for U.S. politics over the next decade.

The question—whether in the Persian Gulf, Western Europe or Central America—is this: is the aim of U.S. foreign policy to reassert American dominance through American leadership of an international coalition? Or is U.S. participation intended to encourage multilateral leadership in future conflicts? Between these alternatives lies past and future: the faded dreams of the '80s and the uncomfortable realities of the '90s. □

Must we trade body bags for oil?

Everyone—the President, the Congress, the American people—says they want a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis.

IS THIS SEEKING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION?

The U.S. rushed 230,000 troops into the Persian Gulf—far more than necessary to defend Saudi Arabia or help enforce the United Nations' trade embargo.

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WHY NOT GIVE PEACE A CHANCE?

We seem to be willing to wait forever for mild sanctions to help free South Africa. Why the rush to declare this embargo a failure?

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By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

WHEN TOUGH NEW GASOLINE-MILEAGE requirements went down in defeat in the Senate this September, environmentalists promised to continue fighting the good fight on behalf of enhanced fuel efficiency. Vowed one Sierra Club lobbyist in Washington, "We will come back with both guns blazing and win this one next year."

This is unfortunate, however, because federal fuel efficiency standards have done little to improve the environment and arguably may even have made it worse.

The crusade for better mileage, a cause célèbre of groups such as the Sierra Club since the '70s, is a classic illustration of how a partial solution is really no solution at all. While the crusade addresses the fact that autos gobble too much gas per mile and spew too many noxious fumes, it doesn't speak to the other harms inflicted by cars.

Autos, for instance, kill more people per year in highway accidents than many mid-sized wars. They damage roads, weaken structures and are an essential building block in a politico-economic system based on de-urbanization, extensive land use and social atomization. Rather than an efficient way of getting around, as many people still seem to believe, they're highly inefficient and impose costs on American society totaling hundreds of billions of dollars a year.

The problem with addressing fuel efficiency alone is that it may actually wind up exacerbating other aspects of the auto crisis. Consider the following:

- Better mileage means cheaper driving, which in turn means more driving, more congestion and more suburban sprawl that automobiles feed. Since the early '70s, real fuel costs, adjusted for inflation, have fallen better than 40 percent and the number of cars on the road has gone up by the same proportion, while total mileage in the U.S. has risen slightly faster.

- More cars means more deaths. While deaths per mile have declined thanks to efforts of groups such as the Center for Auto Safety, total highway fatalities in the U.S. went up 6.5 percent between 1982 and 1987 simply because so many more cars were on the road. Of the 48,800 Americans killed by motor vehicles in 1987, better than 20 percent were cyclists or pedestrians, innocent bystanders in the war of the roads.

- Better mileage does not mean reduced gasoline consumption. Since 1972, in fact, U.S. gas consumption has risen 16 percent, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Suburban sprawl and a proliferating number of vehicles means that auto-and-gas dependence has never been greater. If you don't believe it, ask one of the 240,000 U.S. troops sent to the Persian Gulf to safeguard the U.S. oil supply.

- Despite more cars and more mileage, highway taxes, a measure of how much cars give back to society for what they take, have fallen 16 percent in real terms since the early '70s, a direct consequence of improved fuel efficiency, according to the Motor Vehicle Manufacturer's Association. Congress might have raised taxes to compensate, but instead it chose to give the auto lobby more of a free ride than ever.

To put this in terms intelligible to, say, drug czar William Bennett, it's as if the U.S. had tried to tackle the heroin problem by imposing tough federal heroin-efficiency standards that enabled junkies to get more bang for the buck. As a result, addicts would

Why good gas mileage is not good enough



use less heroin per session and might have to steal less to support their habit. But falling prices, an inevitable byproduct of such a policy, means they'd be tempted to shoot up more often. Consumption would remain essentially unchanged, while the number of addicts might even go up.

False impressions would be fostered and illusions engendered. As with smack, so too

AUTOMOBILES

with cars: years of propaganda by the Sierra Club and other groups notwithstanding, for example, the enemy is not the high-powered gas guzzler. A fuel-efficient subcompact generates essentially as much noise and congestion and stimulates just as much demand for additional highway space and low-cost parking, yet pays less to society in the form of highway taxes. Rather than a 50-mpg Honda, the most environmentally benign car may be the high-powered sports car that pays more taxes yet is clearly not designed for such mundane pursuits as shopping or commuting, both of which take place when demand for highway space is greatest.

The auto crisis is about programmed waste, intentional inefficiency and the general decline of the American way of life.

What's to be done: So what's the answer, if not government-mandated fuel-efficiency standards? The first step toward a cure is a diagnosis—an understanding of what, exactly, the auto crisis is. It is not the price of progress, as propagandists for the Big Three auto manufacturers have long argued vis-a-vis congestion. It is not the price of individual mobility, since mounting congestion means declining mobility for countless communities from Long Island to Southern California. It is also not an indication of humankind's determination to live beyond its means, as some latter-day Malthusians would argue.

Rather, the automobile crisis is about programmed waste, intentional inefficiency and the general decline of the American Way of Life. Beginning before World War I, the U.S. poured enormous resources into automobile infrastructure in pursuit of a social ideal based on individualism, dispersal of the urban working class and what has been called "embourgeoisement of the proletariat."

Henry Ford, who believed that "the average worker ... wants a job in which he does not have to think," also preached that "the ultimate solution" to the problem of urban unrest "will be the abandonment of the city, its abandonment as a blunder."

William F. Dix, one of the first auto propagandists, argued as early as 1904 that mass auto ownership would lead to a working class composed of "healthier, happier, more intelligent and self-respecting citizens because of the chance to live among the meadows and flowers of the country instead of the crowded city streets"—one injured to

the appeals of union organizers and street-corner socialists.

"No man who owns his own house and lot can be a Communist—he has too much to do," added William J. Levitt, of Levittown fame, in 1948, an illustration of how widespread homeownership, facilitated by near-universal auto ownership, was supposed to calm the troubled political waters.

With time out for the Depression and World War II, the American ruling class accomplished this goal of de-urbanization and de-proletarianism in spades. The strategy paid enormous dividends for a time, of course, but by the early '70s problems had become apparent. With de-proletarianization came de-industrialization and a consumer-driven economy in which buying, having and owning (activities confined to an increasingly narrow stratum of the population) regularly exceed production and investment. With urban abandonment came urban collapse and an accumulation of social horrors from homelessness to Uzis and crack. With suburbanization came pollution, congestion and the destruction of more open land than that wrought by a horde of prospectors searching for gold in the Amazon.

The real bill: All these things are costs—costs borne by society so that motor vehicles can keep running. Although most people think of trains and subways when they think of public subsidies, the subsidy for private motor transport is actually far larger. As recently as 1985, for instance, federal, state and local governments shelled out \$21 billion more than what motorists paid in gas taxes, tolls and other highway-user fees.

More recently, a study by the impeccably conservative Brookings Institution calculated that the cost of deferred maintenance would increase the nation's gross highway expenditures by two-thirds or more, yet another burden that taxpayers will no doubt have to shoulder in the interests of private auto transport. Based on a 1983 study of municipal finances in Pasadena, Calif., ancillary costs such as cops, courts, fire and ambulance crews to respond to highway emergencies, etc., total more than \$200 per vehicle over and above what motorists pay in highway taxes.

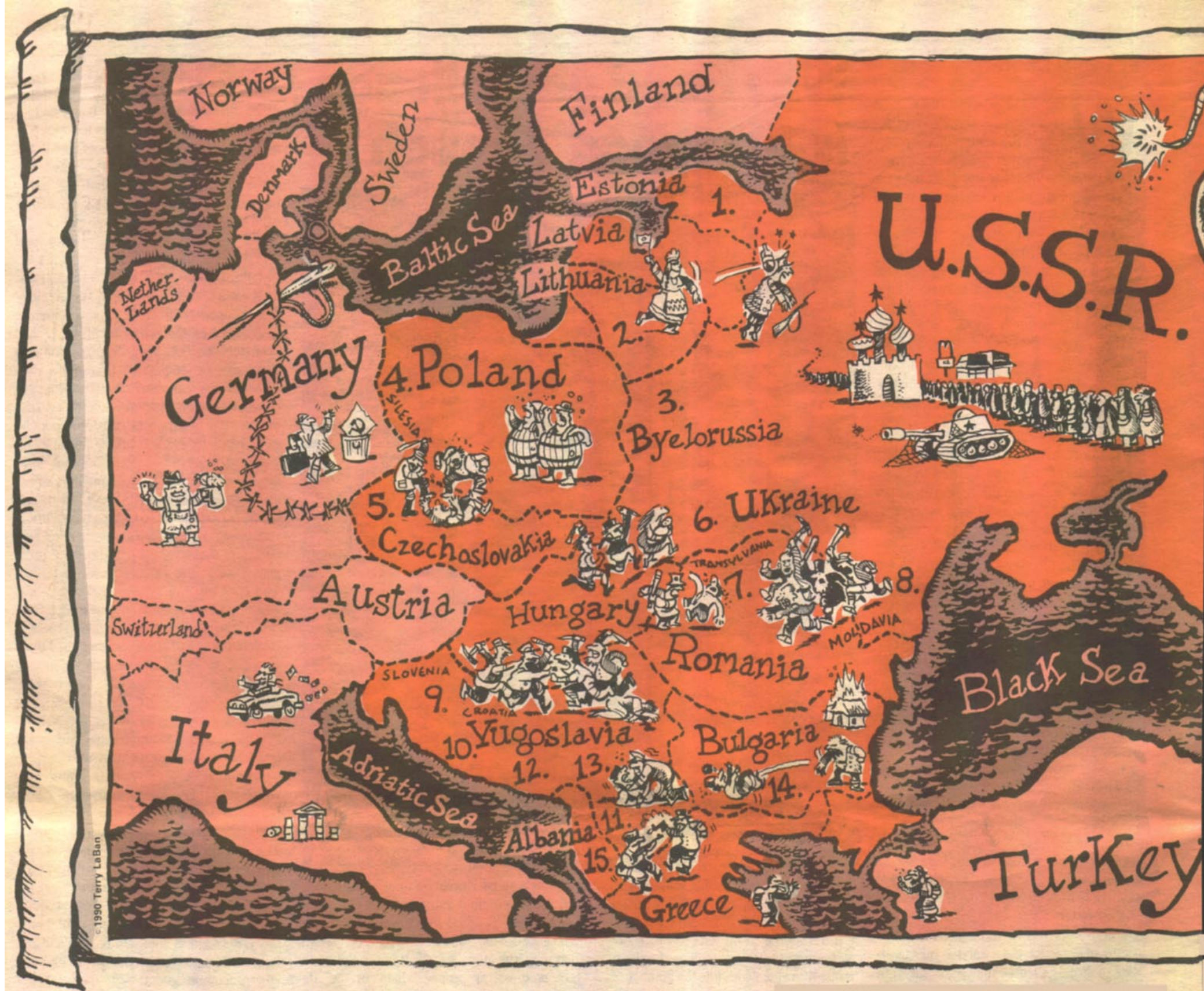
Cumulatively, subsidies such as these add up to more than a dollar per gallon of gasoline. Yet the list goes on. Tax-exempt municipal bonds sold to finance highway construction projects are also a subsidy since the public is required to make up the difference, while business write-offs for employee travel expenses such as parking, gas and tolls (but not, by and large, for mass transit) are still another. There is also the cost of land removed from the tax rolls and commercial development to make way for roads, highways and free parking to consider, as well as pollution costs imposed on general society.

Stanley Hart, a retired highway engineer in California responsible for the study of Pasadena municipal expenditures, recently calculated that a typical car requires about 4,000 square feet of asphalt, a tenth of an acre, in the form of road and parking space—an estimate that may actually be conservative considering that developers in suburban New Jersey are required to put in 3,000 square feet of parking for every 1,000 square feet they build of commercial office space. At current urban real-estate values, that comes to free rent of about \$2,000 a year, or \$3.30 a gallon.

In 1982, a little-known study by the U.S.

Continued on page 22

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 7-13, 1990 11



By Paul Hockenos

1. Russians in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Since Stalin annexed the countries in 1940, more than 1 million Russians, mostly military personnel, have joined the historical Russian minorities in the Baltic Republics. The Russians fear that they will pay for the legacy of Moscow's imposed rule. The official language is already set to change from Russian to the native tongues, and more such measures are in store as the republics go their own ways.

2. Poles in Lithuania.

Relations between Poland and the republic are strained over the presence of 260,000 Poles in the south, which belonged to Poland until 1939. Polish nationalist groups demand that the borders be redrawn. Lithuania and Byelorussia are also at odds over the Eastern frontier.

3. Poles in Byelorussia, Byelorussians in Poland

At an October 1990 meeting with Warsaw, the Minsk government refused to confirm the inviolability of the 1945 border. In recent Polish elections, the Byelorussian candidates scored well in the mountainous northeast, where most of the nearly quarter-million minority lives. They insist that Byelorussian be an official second language in schools and offices. Resentment between the peoples still festers from the battles that followed Poland's invasion of the region after World War I.

4. Germans in Polish Silesia.

After interminable foot-dragging, German Federal Republic Chancellor Helmut Kohl finally agreed this year to recognize the post-war Oder-Niesse border. One source of his intransigence was the powerful, right-wing Silesian Patriots Club and League of Expellees, the latter of which claims to represent the interests of the 12 million Germans ousted from Eastern Europe after the war. Today, 600,000 to 800,000 Polonized but ethnically German citizens live in Upper Silesia and enjoy full political rights. But Polish-German antagonism is never far from the surface, as recent disputes over entry visas and the Polish community in Berlin show.

5. Czechs and Slovaks.

Next to the economic transition, the partnership between the northern Czech lands and southern Slovakia is the burning issue of the day in the renamed Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic until 1989). While Slovakia has full autonomy within the republic, Bratislava has always resented playing second fiddle to Prague. The Slovak National Party captured 14 percent of the vote in the June Slovak election. It and various unsavory friends have promoted dozens of demonstrations calling for an independent Slovakia. The precedent is not encouraging: from 1941-44 an independent Slovak regime collaborated with the Axis powers. The Hungarian minority, 12 percent of the Slovak nation, still bear legitimate grudges from their persecution under the Communists.

6. Religious strife in the Ukraine.

While the 52-million-person republic includes a 20 per-

cent Russian minority and much smaller numbers of Jews and Hungarians, the conflict is pitched between East and West. The mostly Orthodox population in the East is not at all as sure as the western Uniate Catholics that independence is in their best interest. Growing poverty and starvation have sparked a mass exodus. Grisly battle scenes transpire daily on the Hungarian border.

7. Hungarians in Transylvania.

The more than 2 million ethnic Hungarians in Western Romania make up the largest minority in Europe. During the Hapsburg monarchy, the region was a melting pot for Hungarians, Serbs, Romanians, Germans, Gypsies and Jews. The post-World War I peace treaty assigned the territory to Romania, part of which Hungarian fascists reoccupied from 1941 to 1944. The blood spilled by both sides in the '40s and the harsh anti-minority policies of the Stalinist regimes have built none-too-harmonious a foundation for Hungarian-Romanian rapprochement. A millions-strong ultranationalist movement has coalesced to counter mostly exaggerated charges of Hungarian nationalism. Tension boiled over in March 1990 when the peoples clashed in Tirgu Mures, leaving at least 30 people dead. Tempers in Budapest and Bucharest flared, bringing the leaderships toe to toe in a nasty war of words.

8. Moldavians in the Soviet Union.

The multi-ethnic Soviet republic of Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians and Gagauz declared its independence this year, 50 years after the annexation of northern Bukovina and eastern Bessarabia under the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The ruling right-wing Moldavian Popular Front and like-minded nationalists in the Romanian opposition have made it

14th

A year to remember

Ten years from now, we will look back on 1990 as a watershed in the political life of our nation. It will be seen as the year the American people finally began to stand up against a bankrupt political system and the corrupt politicians who administer it, a year that saw the first stirrings of a mature and responsible new left in our land. And we hope

that 1991 will also mark a new stage in the development of *In These Times*, one in which we advance from being the best political weekly in America to being also one of the most widely recognized and appreciated.

We sincerely believe that with the active support of our readers this can come about. We have survived 14 of the most retrograde years in the history of our nation, and if we have not exactly prospered, we have still grown both in circulation and reputation. This is a feat that could never have been accomplished without the steady support of our readers and of the organizations represented in the following pages. For that, we are deeply grateful.



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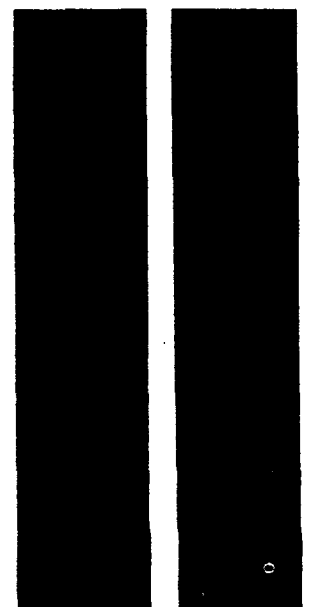


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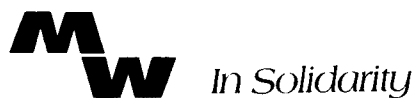
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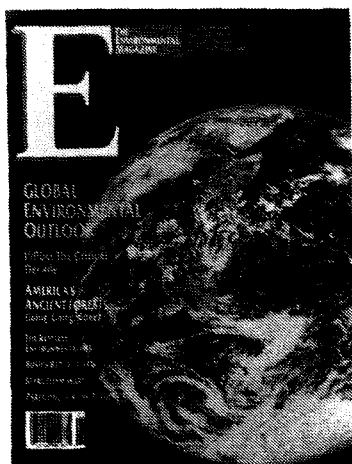
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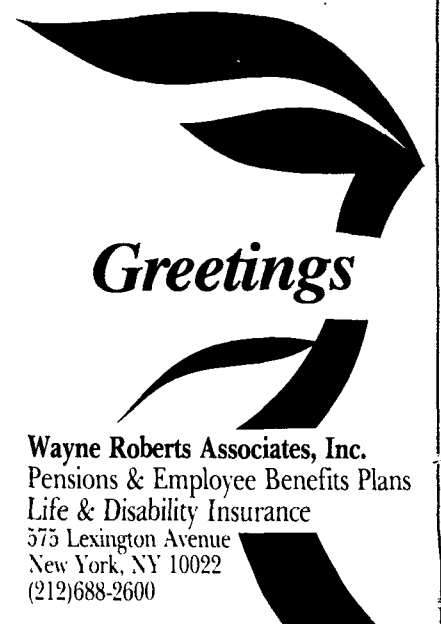
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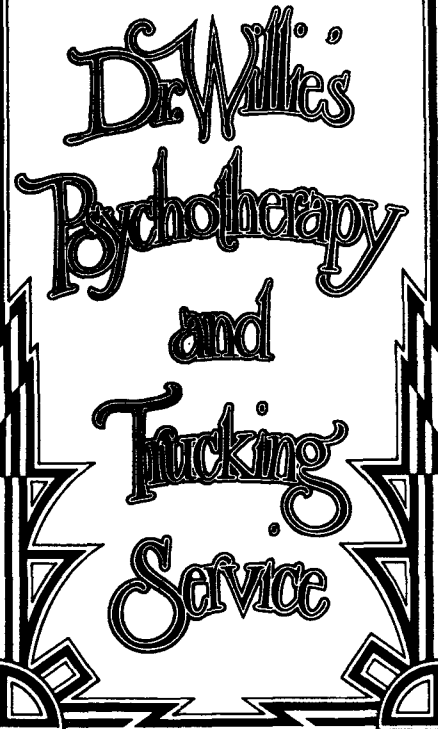
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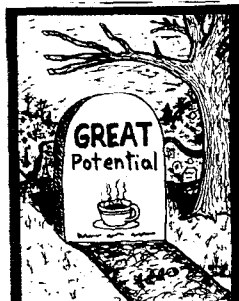


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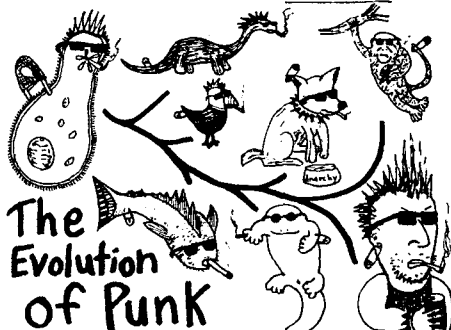


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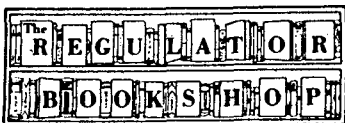
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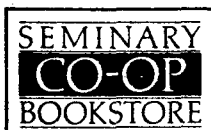
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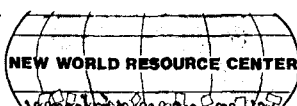
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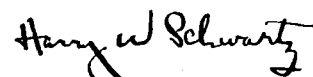
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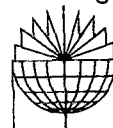
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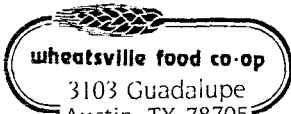
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keep us going. Thanks!
Keep ripping away the
media sound-proofing
which deafens us all!

James & Isara Drummond
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Thank you
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for inspiring and
informing my music

Kristin Lems
Singer-Songwriter/
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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY from

IN THESE TIMES

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*Keep hanging in there.
Your reporting helps keep
my leftist beliefs intact
against the onslaught from
the right.*

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for its past achievements and
best wishes for vigorous
growth and an outstanding future*
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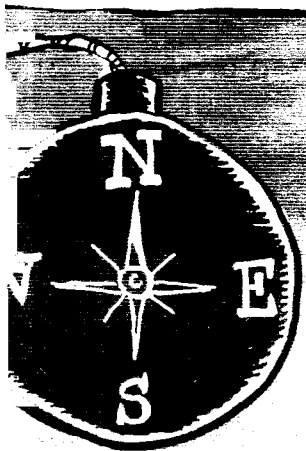
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WHO HATES WHO in EASTERN EUROPE A GUIDE

LABAN

clear that the region *will* "return to Greater Romania"—the only question is when. The minorities believe otherwise, however, and when the Christianized Turkish Gagauz declared their autonomy in October, the Moldavian Popular Front responded with martial law and troops. The republic's movement is certain to accelerate the nationalist dynamic in Romania.

9. Slovenes and Serbs.

Hostility between the maverick Republic of Slovenia and the Yugoslav army came to a head in October when the army squelched a Slovene initiative to put territorial defense under the republic's control. Slovenia has already declared its independence and is well on the way to breaking from the multinational state. How far the diminutive republic will test Belgrade's muscle is an open question.

10. Serbs in Croatia.

Civil war was only narrowly averted last month in the Croat Republic. Along the Adriatic, mass demonstrations and street skirmishes between the 600,000-strong Serb minority and the Croat militia brought nationalists in both republics to their feet. The newly-elected nationalists in Zagreb have only aggravated their Serb minority's bitterness. Belgrade has done nothing to ease the tension, because it is eager to divert attention from Kosovo and its own lethargic progress toward democracy. Croat discrimination against the Serbs has been ruthlessly manipulated by the demagogic Slobodan Milosevic, president of Serbia as well as president of the Socialist Party. But even Milosevic's nationalist rhetoric pales compared to that of his top rival from the Movement for Serbian Renewal party.

11. Albanians in Macedonia, Macedonians in Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria.

The increasingly vocal protest of the 400,000 ethnic Albanians against the republic's ethnic policy and in solidarity with their Kosovar brothers only adds to Yugoslavia's volatile chemistry. The opposition Macedonian nationalist party demands the expulsion of all Albanians to Kosovo—a proposal, needless to say, not appreciated in Serbia. Mass demonstrations have also backed the new party's charge that territory from each of its neighbors be "reincorporated" into a Greater Macedonia. The border changes after the 1912-13 Balkan Wars left Macedonian minorities in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.

12. Nationalities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Divided between Serbs, Croats and Moslems, the republic goes to the polls for the first time on November 18. It is the key to the country's political balance. But the Serbs appear on their own again, and a Croat-Moslem coalition could well tilt the scales decisively against Belgrade.

13. Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo.

No conflict is more explosive than that between the Serb government and the ethnic Albanians in its southern Kosovo province. More than 90 percent of the historically Serb region is now inhabited by Albanians. Milosevic's heavy-handed drive to reassert full control over the once-autonomous province has left dozens of Albanians dead this year alone. Belgrade's provocations, immensely popular at home, have shortened the Albanians' fuse. Militant nationalist voices are now clearly audible through the Albanian movement's democratic trappings. Although few

doubt that the ethnic Albanians' ultimate goal is a united fatherland, the Albanian government has diplomatically kept its distance. But what will the awakened Albanian population next door say when they find their voice?

14. Turks in Bulgaria.

Although the dictatorship is gone, the hate campaign that the toppled regime led against the Turkish minority (10 percent of the population) lives on in Bulgarian chauvinism. When the minority's religious and cultural rights were restored last January, anti-Turk demonstrations paralyzed the major cities. The economy's near-total collapse bodes ill for ethnic reconciliation.

15. Greeks and tribalism in Albania.

Four decades of ultra-Stalinism froze the centuries-long internecine tribalism that raged between the northern Ghegs and southern Tosks. Whether the thaw in progress will revive the blood feud remains to be seen. Tirana's repression of the quarter-million Greeks there has raised backs more than once in Athens.

16. Gypsies in Eastern Europe.

The Croats may dislike the Serbs, and the Hungarians may look down on the Romanians—but everybody, simply *everybody* hates the Gypsies. The 5 million to 6 million Romany-speaking people in Central and Eastern Europe are the latest scapegoats for the post-Communist countries' every problem. Pogroms in Transylvania, proposed work camps in Slovakia, visa restrictions everywhere—the persecution of the region's most persecuted people is certain to escalate as Eastern Europe's economies face their hardest winter in decades.

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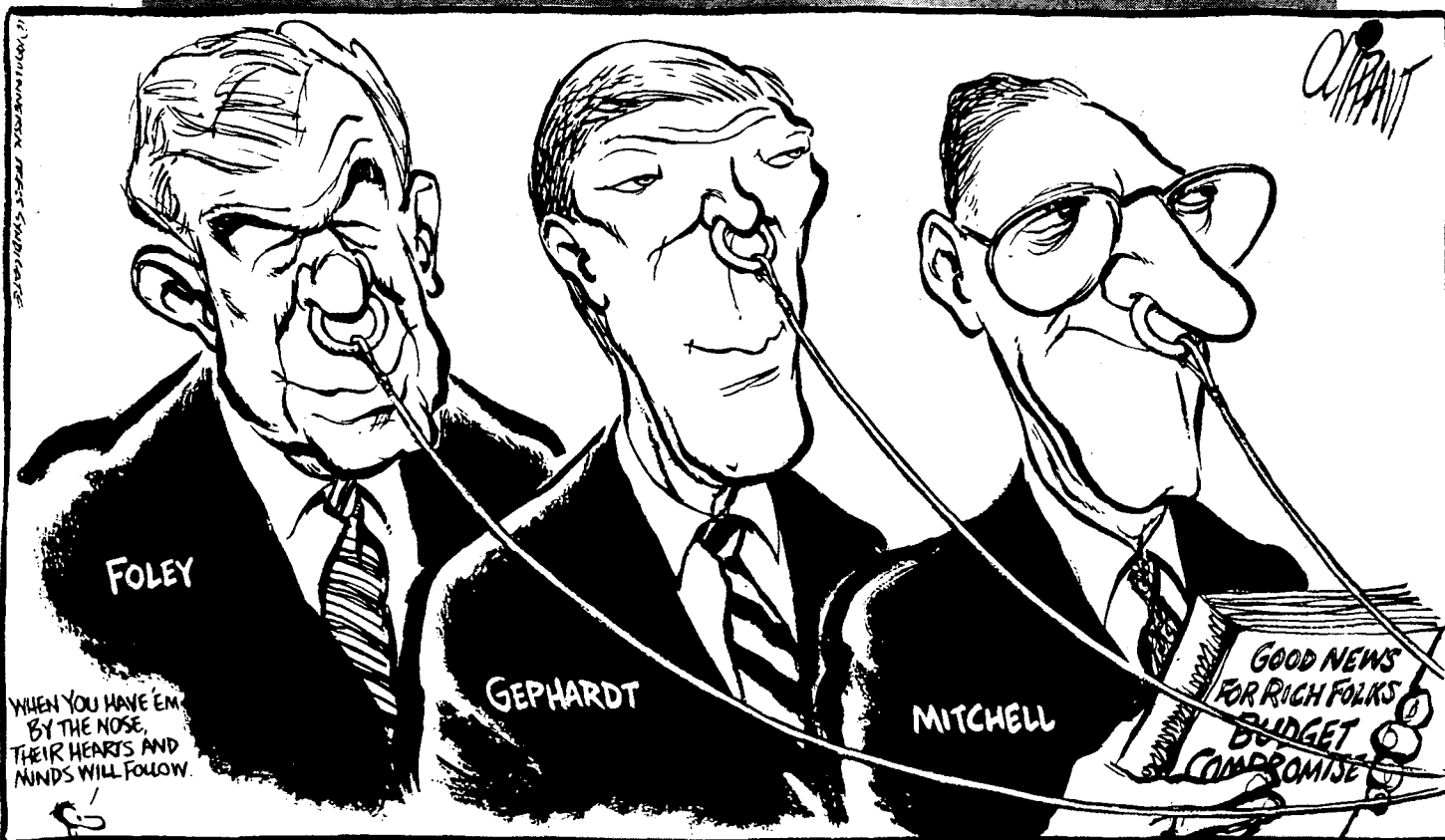
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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

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THE LOYAL OPPOSITION.

Democrats surrender policy role to Bush

Remember the "peace dividend"? When the Cold War ended only a year or two ago, everybody was talking about it. But now the great popular expectation of an end to rampant militarization has been wiped from the public mind. And the new federal budget agreement, presented as a struggle between rival parties with differing philosophies, has locked Cold War arms-spending levels into place for at least the next three years.

For 40-odd years—and with a vengeance during Reagan's reign—a militarized economy was foisted on the American people as a necessity to prevent the Soviets from invading Western Europe. Last year's anti-Communist revolution in Eastern Europe, which had been presaged by the Hungarian uprising in 1956, the Prague Spring in 1968 and the Solidarity movement in Poland in 1980, finally put an end to the idea that the Soviets could conduct a war against the West with the hostile peoples of Eastern Europe at their backs. With profound reluctance, even the Bush administration had to admit that the threat was gone or, as they grudgingly put it, reduced.

The threat of a peace-oriented economy created a minor crisis among Bush administration insiders. Was the bonanza of appropriations for their military contractor friends really coming to an end? Couldn't something be done to protect these benefactors of Republicans and Democrats alike? Or would the massive resources of the federal government have to be squandered on the social needs of working people? What to do?

The administration's first strike to save arms spending was the war on drugs. It didn't quite do the trick, although it did give us the Panama invasion and the capture of that well-known drug trafficker and CIA asset, Manuel Noriega. Even so, the drug war is really a war on minority communities at home and, as such, is incapable of holding the public's attention despite the media's best efforts. Only months after Bush's first great military victory (in the public opinion polls if not on the battlefield), people forgot about Noriega and pressure again started mounting for real cuts in the arms budget.

But Bush was born under a lucky star. Not only was he blessed in 1988 to have Michael Dukakis limping against him in the presidential election but two years later he had Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait to save the day for his Pentagon pals. With Bush sending 240,000 American troops overseas and ranting on about Hitler reincarnate, it was a cinch to stop the Democratic leadership from thinking about arms cuts.

Even so, the budget agreement that passed after weeks of wrangling reads as if the Pentagon wrote it. For the first time in our history, military spending has been made virtually untouchable for a three-year period. Under this new system, federal spending is divided into three categories—domestic, military and foreign aid. Each has its own spending cap—read floor—already agreed to by Congress and the White House. This means that if Congress were later to decide to spend more money on housing or education, the additional money could not come from cuts in military spending or foreign aid but would have to come from other domestic programs.

Under the old law—and as the federal government has always operated in the past—money for new programs could be offset, if desired, by cuts anywhere else in the budget, including the military. But now the only way of cutting military spending to free up money for schools, housing or health care is to amend the budget law—which means reopening the can of worms just closed. And with the present makeup of Congress that appears a political impossibility.

There's more. Congress has also surrendered its power to decide what category spending for various programs belongs in. It has instead transferred that power to the administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which will now decide such things as whether nuclear research is a military program or a domestic one. That means, for example, that OMB could put nuclear research in the domestic category, thereby freeing up more money for the military and forcing equivalent cuts in domestic spending.

This amounts to a massive shift in power from Congress to the White House, one that has allowed Bush to get exactly what he wanted while everyone's attention was diverted by the charade about taxes. It is a near-total surrender by the Democrats not only of their power to determine national priorities but of their responsibility as an opposition party. Sound familiar?

LETTERS

Budget boogie bingo

DURING THE SAME WEEK WHEN THE PROLONGED federal budget boogie has lurched into its final awkward steps, I picked up *ITT* and read Woody Igou's backpage piece on the junk mail problem (Oct. 31). The same mail that brought me my always-welcomed *In These Times* also brought a slew of unwelcome mail: six unrequested catalogues, a notice that I'd been selected as a finalist in some con-game sweepstakes I hadn't entered, some brightly colored Republican Party propaganda and—this was a record for a single day's take—eight solicitations for charitable giving. Two neighbors complained about similar clutter and waste in their mailboxes. No one wants this stuff. Even my neighborhood recycling project won't accept the slick paper most of it is printed on.

It occurred to me that the unrelated problems of budget deficit and junk mail could be united in a marriage of convenience: tax junk mail. Charge more for commercial bulk mailings that clutter our creaky, sluggish, already overburdened postal system. (Exempt not-for-profits, of course, so, yeah, I'd still end up with my eight charitable solicitations.) Among the businesspeople who paid for and own our government, this idea will probably be as unpopular as the tax-the-rich bone that was thrown into the budget scheme to entice a wary populace just before elections. But a tax-on-junk-mail initiative on the ballot would certainly get my vote.

Ethyl Beard
Downers Grove, Ill.

In defense of Bernie Sanders

THE KNEE-JERK NEGATIVISTIC, ANTI-AMERICANISM of the American left, such as that emanating from anti-imperialist circles in Vermont in opposition to Bernie Sanders, threatens to marginalize the movement once again. Instead of encouraging Bush to pursue U.N.-sponsored multinational cooperation in opposition to Iraqi aggression, many on the left call for unilateral U.S. withdrawal, which would (1) destroy U.N. cooperation, (2) destabilize the situation, and (3) likely bring about the war that the multilateral action has so far prevented.

Sure, Bush's motives are lousy. But in bringing in the U.N., he created constraints on his own unilateral action that he didn't anticipate. The situation remains dangerous, but the fact of international cooperation is a remarkable precedent with tremendous possibilities.

No doubt there is pressure on Bush to undo the fragile coalition with a unilateral attack. And, yes, the left is correct, unilateral U.S. action would be a disaster. But by encouraging the multilateral approach, the left would, in fact, be working against American unilateral action. A positive formulation would also give our critique credibility. The lack of an alternative energy policy, arms dealing, support for military dictators, disinterest in human rights, etc., all contributed to this Middle East crisis. And we should be demanding a windfall-profit tax on oil and increased financial contributions from oil-dependent Japan and Germany to finance the U.N. operation. These—and multinational cooperation rather than uni-

lateral withdrawal—are the issues we ought to focus on in public actions and media forums.

Marty Jezer
Guilford, Vt.

Double standard

MARK BRUZONSKY (*ITT*, OCT. 17) ASKS, "HOW would the world react if dozens of Syrian Jews were shot dead on the streets of Damascus, hundreds injured, and ambulances were prevented from coming to get the wounded?"

To answer that question, one should consider how the world has reacted to the persecution of various ethnic minorities in the Arab world.

How has the world reacted to the ongoing persecution of blacks by Arabs in the Sudan? An eyewitness report on the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* last year revealed that thousands of black children from the Dinka tribe have been kidnapped and sold into slavery by government-backed Sudanese Arab militias. Has the United Nations discussed this issue?

How has the world reacted to the torture of Egyptian dissidents by government police? A study released just last week by Amnesty International documented the systematic and widespread use of torture by the Egyptian secret police against political dissidents. Yet Amnesty's report garnered just three paragraphs in the *Washington Post's* "news brief section" and was relegated to the "food section" of the *Philadelphia In-*

quirer. Since Egypt is the second-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid and has been made the linchpin of America's coalition against Iraq, one would think that there would be greater interest in Cairo's human-rights record.

And what about the Syrian Jewish community, to which Bruzonsky makes reference? While Bruzonsky sketches a hypothetical massacre of Syrian Jews, the truth is that over the years the Syrian secret police have murdered, tortured or otherwise abused many dozens of Syrian Jews. When was the last time anybody called for sanctions against Syria?

Bertram Korn Jr.
Executive Director, Committee for Accuracy
in Middle East Reporting in America
Philadelphia

Exposed

IT APPEARS THAT *ITT* HAS PERFORMED DURING THE last few weeks a disappearance act worthy of a Houdini. At the time when the Persian Gulf crisis is the issue of greatest public opinion to everybody in this country and in much of the world, when the most massive mobilization of our military forces halfway around the world has taken place, when our president and politicians in and out of Congress speak daily of unavoidable bloody war in the desert sands of Arabia, when our peace dividend is used to recharge the war machine and to keep the blood money rolling in for defense contractors, at this momentous time the critical voice

of *In These Times* has been strangely silent. In the last four issues, covering the period of October 3 to October 30, there has been in the pages of *ITT* no editorial comment, no "Viewpoint" columns on these issues, not even factual reports of the demonstrations and other protest actions in the land. The only exceptions are the whimsical personal observations of Joel Bleifuss in his weekly column.

The glaring news blackout cannot be explained as an accidental omission. I suggest it is due to a deliberate policy of the editorial staff so as not to offend some influential interest groups. What a disgrace for this paper on which we have come to depend for incisive and no-holds-barred presentation of the progressive viewpoint!

Michael Golomb
West Lafayette, Ind.

Editor's note: Since the Gulf crisis began in August, we have published six editorials on the subject, including our first-ever cover editorial ("Overkill," Aug. 29), 20 articles or viewpoints directly related to the invasion and the administration response and several pieces indirectly related. We have noted the New York demonstration calling for withdrawal of troops and called for public pressure on Congress and the administration to stop Bush's bellicosity. Michael Golomb's paranoia is a bit extreme, even for a traditional leftist. Perhaps he can tell us who his mysterious "influential interest groups" are. That would be a newsworthy story.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

By James Weinstein

IF EVER THERE WAS A NEED FOR AN effective left in the United States, it's now. A series of current crises cry out for an alternative to the politics and politicians that have dominated our public life in recent decades. And yet, even as an increasing number of Americans view current politics as the domain of wealthy special interests, the left remains more fragmented, timid and directionless than ever in this century.

As congressional Democratic leaders joined the Bush administration in a tax and spending plan blatantly favoring both the rich and military contractors, voters nationwide talked about throwing the incumbents out. But getting rid of their current representatives would be no solution to the corruption of our political system. Without a left alternative, it would only mean electing others who represent the wealthy elite. So the more likely result of this anger and disgust will be even more people dropping away from participation in electoral activity. After all, why bother voting for yet another politician who will not represent you?

For more than 50 years—since the '30s, when Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal worked closely with the then-new industrial unions and with other liberal groups—organized workers, blacks and women have seen the Democrats as the party more concerned with their needs. And even now, the few members of Congress who honestly represent the interests of their constituents are Democrats. Yet Democratic leaders, while trying to retain their image as the champions of working people, have become all but indistinguishable from their nominal opponents in the party of big business.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, the left has had an ambivalent attitude toward the Democrats, and sporadically also toward electoral politics. In 1948, Communists and others split with the Democratic Party and ran former Vice President Henry Wallace in a third-party presidential campaign that succeeded only in further isolating opponents of the Cold War. In the '60s, a student-led New Left sprung up in opposition to both major parties, which outdid each other in supporting the Vietnam War. Massive teach-ins and street demonstrations substituted for political action, as New Leftists boasted about their pressure tactics from outside the traditional political system.

By 1968, as New Left activity stirred up widespread opposition to the war, Democratic politicians began to see the anti-war movement's political potential. Jumping on board, Democratic Senators Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy based their presidential campaigns on ending the war. And four years later, despite Kennedy's assassination and McCarthy's loss of the nomination to Hubert Humphrey in 1968, Sen. George McGovern captured the 1972 Democratic nomination on an anti-war platform—a process that pulled most people on the left into his campaign. But just as McGovern's success led leftists back to the Democratic Party, his overwhelming defeat by Richard Nixon led them once again to abandon electoral activity.

Then came Nixon and Watergate, followed by the temporary Republican loss of

A left return to relevance



the presidency and the disappointment of Jimmy Carter's neoconservative tenure. By 1980 a group on the left was again ready to enter the national political arena, but they were unwilling to challenge Carter for the Democratic nomination. Choosing to ignore the lesson of Wallace's disastrous 1948 Progressive Party campaign, they embarked on yet another third-party effort, this time as the Citizens Party. Pouring time and money into getting on state ballots, the new party nominated environmentalist Barry Commoner for president and then promptly disappeared from public view.

Since then, the left has participated in many single-issue movements. At times these have functioned as effective lobbying groups, but they have not contested for office in their own behalf, nor have they provided a distinct left challenge to those in power. After eight years of Reagan and two of George Bush, however, the vital importance of who controls the government has become so patently obvious that many on the left are again forced to consider how to contest for office on the basis of their own beliefs. But few have thought much about how to avoid either being absorbed into the Democratic Party as it is now constituted or forming a party of their own that is totally isolated from the mainstream of American political life.

In short, we on the left are all victims of half a century of in-again, out-again activity that has prevented the development of a viable independent left, much less a movement with a clear sense of direction and purpose. In the light of popular discontent over unfair tax policies, deteriorating schools, skyrocketing health costs, crime and senseless violence, homelessness and other signs of social disintegration, the need for a new left is obvious. Yet despite

the palpable public anger about the failure of elected officials to begin solving these problems, we on the left don't have a clue about how to gain real influence and a popular constituency. Should leftists form a new third party? Should we continue to work inside the Democratic Party as part of a coalition in which we have no public constituency? Or is there another alternative that might promise independence coupled with effectiveness?

Learning from past success: History provides at least one useful prototype: the Nonpartisan League of North Dakota, which was organized in 1915 by members of the Socialist Party and the Progressive wing of the Republicans and which enjoyed startling success for a decade or more.

In the early 1900s, just as today, millions of Americans were angry about the way elected officials responded to popular needs. It was in these years that the old Socialist Party of America became a significant presence in all aspects of American life, and especially in many of the agrarian states that had supported the Populist movement of the late 19th century. In North Dakota the Socialists had gained a foothold by 1910. The state was not among the Socialists' 10 leading states between 1910 and 1915, but the party had managed to elect mayors in three North Dakota towns, as well as many other local officials, and to elect one member of the state legislature during these years.

Yet despite these successes, Socialist leaders were acutely aware of the fact that their program—calling for rural credit, state-owned grain mills and elevators, state hail, plant and animal-disease insurance, and unemployment insurance for labor—had a lot more popular support than the party itself. North Dakota farmers were furious at the market control exercised by rail-

roads, banks and middlemen and saw officeholders as captives of these special interests, but few were ready to abandon their traditional party loyalties.

To get around this problem the Socialist state committee set up an auxiliary "organization department" designed to attract non-Socialists who supported the party's views but were unwilling to sign a membership card. And in 1914 they hired Arthur Townley, a recent convert, to organize the new department and test the gap between support for the party and for its platform. Equipped with a party-supplied Model T Ford and lots of Socialist literature, Townley toured the state, holding meetings and signing people up for this Socialist auxiliary.

His success was instantaneous. In less than three months, Townley had four organizers at work and the department had almost as many members as the party itself. But instead of rejoicing, Socialist leaders reacted with apprehension. Threatened by this potential rival in their midst, they ended the experiment in 1915 and Townley was out of a job.

But it was too late. Townley had seen the light and was not to be stopped. If the party wouldn't let him organize people under its auspices, it couldn't stop him from doing so on his own. So he gathered together a group of party members and former members, along with some Progressive Republicans and started organizing a new kind of political movement.

The idea of Townley's new group, which he called the Nonpartisan League, was straightforward. It grew out of North Dakota's new direct primary law, one of many adopted by states throughout the country in the early 1900s. Direct primaries were designed by their supporters so that control of political parties might be taken from the cliques of professional politicians and placed in the hands of party voters. Townley simply proposed to use the primaries to elect Nonpartisan League members to office, regardless of what party ticket they ran on.

The League, therefore, accepted members from all political parties, being interested only in their commitment to vote for candidates pledged to the League program. Townley's mission was to unite the farmers of the state regardless of past affiliation into "an organization that will stand apart from every political party" and put men in office to legislate in its members' best interests.

Solving an old problem: Historically, farmers groups like the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) and the Farmers' Alliance had operated primarily as pressure groups, and on the balance-of-power principle of helping friends and defeating enemies. When this failed in the late 1880s, farmers and workers had moved on to Populism, an attempt at political action through a third party. That, too, failed when, in 1896, the Democrats stole key planks in the Populists' platform and nominated William Jennings Bryan for president. After that, farmers retreated from political action and formed the Equity Society, which sought directly to benefit its members by organizing enterprises such as grain elevators and providing other direct services.

None of these attempts had solved the farmers' problems, but the Nonpartisan

VIEWPOINT

League was something genuinely different. As the League's historian, Robert Morlan, writes, the League "was a return to the belief in the necessity of political action if effective control of the economy was to be achieved, but it recognized both the inadequacy of balance-of-power tactics and the numerous failures of third parties."

The key to the League's success was that while returning to political action, it existed outside the framework of any political party. League members entered the primaries of existing parties and nominated candidates who supported the League program, but they were unconcerned about party labels. Once candidates were selected at League conventions, members were expected to vote for them in either the Republican or Democratic primaries.

League enemies accused it of "subverting the primary law" by choosing candidates at its local conventions. But Townley and his fellow organizers insisted that they were simply endorsing individuals to run in the primary of the party of their choice. Since North Dakota normally voted Republican by about two to one, it was assumed that the meaningful contests would be in the Republican primaries, and most were. Even so, in 1916, in the first statewide contest in which the League participated, its district conventions selected 98 Republicans, 21 Democrats and 2 Socialists to run for the state legislature in their own party primaries.

This tactic proved smashingly successful. In its first election, in 1916, the League cap-

tured 18 of the 25 seats being contested for the state Senate. Of these, 14 ran as Republicans and four as Democrats. And the League won 81 of the 113 contests for state representative, 68 as Republicans and 13 as Democrats. In addition, the League candidate for governor, Lynn Frazier, won by almost four to one, and the League candidates for the state Supreme Court all won, with the lowest League candidate besting the highest non-League candidate by 13,000 votes.

It was a stunning victory. Ecstatic Leaguers declared that at last the government of the state was in the hands of the people. But, of course, not everyone saw it that way. As one prominent businessman wrote, "The Nonpartisan League is a band of Socialists, led by an anarchist, bent on the destruction of the country. It will set the state back 20 years, plunge it into an overwhelming debt and make it the laughingstock of the nation. If it stays in power past the next election, most of the businessmen will leave the state and let the damned anarchists run it to suit themselves."

But, he added, it will not last that long. When the farmers "come back to us to borrow money to plant and harvest their crops," we can tell them about "the fallacy of chasing after strange gods every time some soap-box orator grafts his living off them by telling them they are being robbed by legitimate business."

This was only the beginning, however. The League not only lasted past the next

election—and many more after that—but at its height in the '20s elected both U.S. senators and a U.S. representative, as well as virtually the entire state government. And it inspired Farmer-Labor parties in Minnesota and other Midwestern states, thereby setting off decades of successful radicalism that ended only with the New Deal in the late '30s.

Then and now: The story of the League is one of a time very unlike our own. Its quasi-socialist program was aimed at creating the basis for fair participation in the market by farmers, and at establishing minimal social supports for workers. In order to stabilize and equalize credit conditions throughout the state, the League established a state Bank of North Dakota to provide low-cost rural credits, finance state departments and enterprises and serve as a clearinghouse and rediscount agency for banks throughout the state. It also created a state hail-insurance program and other supports to help family farmers become more independent of bankers, grain merchants and railroads.

But while the League program offers little guidance to today's left, its method of intervening in the political system remains strikingly relevant. The key to League success was its independence from either major party, while using the primary system to win nomination on their tickets. This is a technique that the New Right used, though more informally than the League, to end its exile in the wilderness and capture the Republican party in 1980. And it is one that it would do

well for the left to adopt in the '90s.

Such an approach to politics would require a long-term commitment to building electoral constituencies. It could only be done by concentrating on selected legislative districts, either state or congressional. If a suitable candidate could be found to enter the presidential primaries, that might create a left national presence through the primary process—which is where the only meaningful political debates are now possible. But the feckless jump into presidential politics every four years, followed by three years of inactivity, has been one of the fatal habits of the left for much too long. Similarly, left reliance on various forms of pressure groups and lobbies puts it at a permanent and fatal disadvantage to conservatives, given the megabucks available to corporate lobbies and trade associations. If we are serious, we must start where we have a chance of success, defined not simply as winning elections—our goal—but also of building popular constituencies that can have some real political clout even without constituting majorities in any given district.

This is an old-fashioned kind of politics, but it is also the only politics that can work for the left. We can never hope to match the corporate establishment in dollars or access to the commercial media. We can do that only through the organization of people around a program genuinely in their interest. Starting that process won't be easy because it will require breaking long-time bad habits, but it seems our best hope for a return to relevance.

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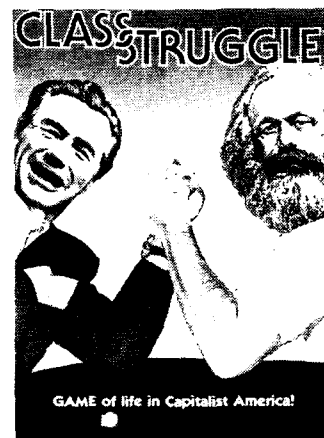
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LIFE IN THE U.S.

By Bill Peterson

Big bats in 'the Queen City': romancing freedom in Cincinnati

FUELING ITS ALMOST LITERARY propensity for dreaming metaphors and metaphysics, baseball last month threw a bone to the rustic little city of Cincinnati, which had taken up temporary residence in America's doghouse. Its lightly heralded Reds pieced together four games of syncopated brilliance to sweep the comic-book superhero Oakland Athletics in the World Series.

Baseball almost never misses a chance like this. In 1989, after Baseball Commissioner Bart Giamatti fell from his summer-long death struggle with Pete Rose, the World Series combatants turned out to be Oakland and San Francisco, linked by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). It was not a subway series but a BART series, bisected, almost predictably, by an earthquake, which lent the resumption of baseball's championship the eerie additional purpose of helping to heal its ravaged environs.

At about this time, communist regimes in Eastern Europe began to fall like so many dominos. And baseball, reacting with unwitting irony to the concurrent decline of democracy and civil liberties in its own country, awarded its highest prize to a club called the Reds. The team's name has long been something of an unspoken sore spot with the heartland's baseball initiates. During the communist witch hunts in the '50s, the club officially changed its name to "Redlegs," but newspaper headline writers wanted nothing to do with that and Joe McCarthy was soon enough censured, anyway.

The city even bristles at its long-standing tag as "The Queen City," because a lot of people here generally won't tolerate queens, of which there are plenty, so a push has been on to make Cincinnati known as "The All-American City." Indeed, in these days of fundamentalism, Republican chief executives and voodoo economic policies that turn responsible citizens into panhandlers before your very eyes, Cincinnati is as all-American as a city can get.

But the artistic community here finds a more apt comparison between Cincinnati and the Eastern bloc. The First Amendment is a free-fire battleground fought daily here, and the living is cheap—with just a few American greenbacks you can set yourself up with a nice room, a pantry full of cigarettes and an icebox loaded with beer.

Of sin and Cincinnati: The city might not be about to change its stripes, but it has lately grown uncomfortable with its presuppositions. A pop psychologist might call it an identity crisis. What it really amounts to is a dawning realization that this city's id will not kneel to its superego without a fight. While Cincinnati has successfully preened

its image as a living heaven for clean-cut conservatism, it is, in reality and history, a wild, saucy place. You won't find a storefront in town proclaiming, "Girls! Girls! Girls!," but if you climb enough of the hills and take the right stairways you soon won't be disappointed by what's behind the next door you open.

Gambling, boozing and whoring dot the city's heritage like the gunfire that splattered the streets in rougher times early this century. Legend has it that Carrie Nation once rode into town, stepped onto the corner of Fifth and Vine, saw nothing in any direction except bars and heavy drinkers, shrugged, turned around and left town. The city of Newport, Ky., just across the Ohio River, was once one of America's gambling and wild-life capitals. And if you spotted a guy hailing a cab on a Cincinnati street, chances are you really spotted a guy hailing a mobile whorehouse.

Against this backdrop, the city put out a cry for security, which is traditionally obtained at the cost of freedom. Casinos and gentlemen's clubs shut down left and

right, along with more presentable establishments. By city ordinance, cabs must either sit at stands or

OHIO

answer calls, but they are not allowed to cruise.

By the '70s, Cincinnati was the right-wing headquarters for any challenge against the First Amendment, plausible and otherwise. Cincinnati, in the name of safety, gratefully and shamelessly enjoined one

A saucy heartland city that's also a conservative haven. Will the real Cincinnati please stand up?

kind of danger in order to fight another.

A Rose is a Rose is a Rose: In the past couple years the city's bill has come due, its fee being the cruel discovery that a table of ordi-

nances and a fresh coat of paint might hide and punish its urges but they cannot be so easily eradicated. First, it was Pete Rose, the blue-collar baseball showman whose resourcefulness and work ethic propagandized an entire generation of overachievers. As his long-term gambling problem and pending expulsion from baseball came to light last summer, the city went into tremors.

One couldn't turn any corner, enter any chili parlor or belly up to any bar without joining a forum on Rose's guilt or innocence, which inevitably turned to how and why. In the course of these discussions, the decidedly amoral position that "everybody does it" always came to Rose's defense. And as Rose was shipped off to jail, another raging controversy shook the city to its moral foundations.

When city and Hamilton County officers shut down the Robert Mapplethorpe photo exhibit for a day to collect evidence for a case against Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) Director Dennis Barrie, the spirit of conservatism in town was bent beyond credulity. Few in Cin-

cinnati were willing to defend *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt, prosecuted here by county Sheriff Simon Leis in the '70s, but with the Mapplethorpe case, Leis and other officials were going way too far. In response, record crowds attended the Mapplethorpe exhibit upon its resumption, while the citizenry expressed outrage that elected officials would take a museum to court over its contents.

The people won out when Barrie was exonerated in court, which came as no surprise. The case against him was untenable. All CAC had to do was demonstrate that the photos in question had value as art and they would beat the obscenity rap. This proved to be a simple matter of bringing in a battery of art experts to tell a jury of local yokels that the photos are, indeed, art. No worthy yokel would be presumptuous enough to contend otherwise in the face of credible experts.

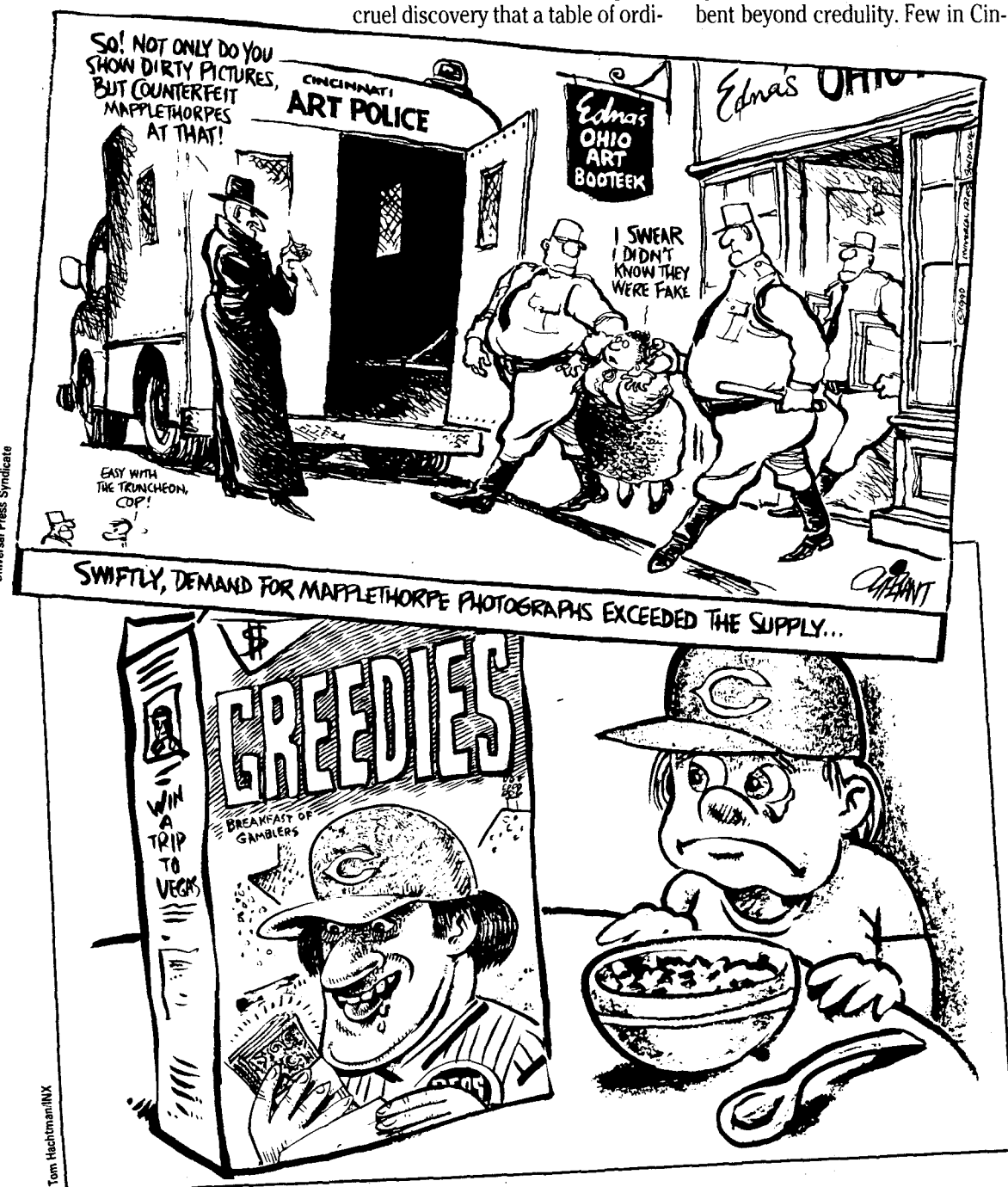
Emotional downpour: Regardless, the city suffered, not from embarrassment at what others must be thinking but from the aftershock of self-delusion. When the Reds pranced to the world championship, this city, with its singular interwoven devotion to its baseball team, went berserk with glee. On Fountain Square in the middle of downtown, 12,000 people converged within minutes of Todd Benzinger's foul-ball catch that ended the series. Two days later, thousands skipped out of school and work to stand on the square in the rain, just to watch the Reds give their short victory speeches.

"This was a city that was feeling bad about itself and desperately in need of something to lift its mood," said Dr. Walter Smitson, director of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center's Central Psychiatric Clinic, in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "There was a lot of pent-up emotion waiting to be tapped. ... We felt great shame over Pete Rose, other things that disturbed our image of ourselves."

Like a city on the order of Prague or Berlin, liberty is not so much accepted as romanced in Cincinnati. It is an exciting city to live in precisely because anything goes, but only with a fight. Opposition is not merely indispensable but undeniable. It is not only that we must hear what the opposition has to say in Cincinnati but that the opposition insists on being heard. Without this setting, freedom cannot truly be said to exist.

Whether you live in a community where right-wing values and policies prevail while opposition is censured, or vice versa, freedom is the casualty. Fortunately for Cincinnati, a small cadre of law enforcers who wished to stifle the opposition was cut down by the people in the Mapplethorpe case. And, fortunately for Cincinnati, the Reds won the World Series, and now the people are plied to understand both of these marvels. ■

Bill Peterson is a writer living in Cincinnati.



Charles Burnett's bedtime stories and bad time stories

To Sleep with Anger
Directed by Charles Burnett

By Pat Aufderheide

THE FIRST HINT THAT THIS WILL be no run-of-the-mill movie experience is the pre-credit sequence, in which fire licks at the grapes in a still life, including a dozing man in a chair. The fire proceeds to dance on the legs of the

FILM

chair and then on the face of the sleeping man.

Charles Burnett's *To Sleep with Anger* unrolls with a fierce mix of the supernatural and the banal. It's the story of many upwardly mobile American families who must reconcile rural roots and folk wisdom with the padded small affluence of middle-class comfort. But this family story is laced with the tale of a trickster, the figure in folklore who amorally wreaks havoc with human plans.

It takes a while for Mom (Mary Alice)—a woman with that benign martyred look that captures a life of suppressed wisdom and nurturing—to realize that Harry (Danny Glover) is something more than an old friend from the South. Not, in fact, until Dad (Paul Butler) is bedridden and her two sons—one resolutely respectable (Carl Lumbly) and the other a hippie with a younger-brother grudge (Richard Brooks)—have had a showdown.

The story deftly mixes the outrageous and the ordinary; Harry is the vehicle to expose conflicts that fester. "The film explores how people survive, how people treat each other, how much they can understand from the past," says Burnett. "And it asks: is it necessary to let go of the past to live in the present?" The title comes from the saying "never go to bed angry," and it refers to the way Harry's arrival exposes long-buried family tensions.

Family stories: This is the third feature by Burnett, the recipient of a MacArthur "genius" grant and one of the most interesting of a remarkable generation of black independent filmmakers whose work has been much heralded but too little seen. The MacArthur grant and accompanying publicity helped him get the backing of producer Ed Pressman (*Wall Street*, *Walker*) and national distribution by the Samuel Goldwyn Company.

His first film, *Killer of Sheep* (1977), was a stunning debut, an understated black-and-white exploration of a few days in the life

of a striving Watts family. It has just been chosen by the National Film Preservation Board as one of the 75 American films that are "culturally, historically and aesthetically significant." *My Brother's Wedding* (1984), better funded but little seen, was an ambitious yet rather stiff study of family relations among working-class blacks. Both films brought to the screen aspects of black family life never before showcased in American cinema. Burnett also wrote and photographed Billy Woodberry's 1982 *Bless Their Little Hearts*, a neorealist look at a black family caught by the downturn of the steel industry in a downward spiral of poverty—another rarely seen black independent film. Not surprisingly, Burnett has become known as a dedicated but thoroughly uncommercial subcultural voice, someone whose work is saddled with the reputation of being good for you.

To Sleep with Anger's strength is in the telling details of daily life—whether it's a husband's protective gesture toward his wife or a mother's automatic movements in the kitchen or a short exchange laden with family history. Burnett's script and camera do not linger on the details but simply build them into the comic-tragic story line. They make palpable the textures and tensions that are rooted in the specifics of African-American experiences.

The film's zest is in its offbeat humor, provoked by Harry's emotional marauding. Harry's old girlfriend, who's been "saved" since their long-ago licentiousness, is a raucous descant to the family's militant respectability, especially

"The film explores how people survive, how people treat each other, how much they can understand from the past," says filmmaker Charles Burnett. "And it asks: is it necessary to let go of the past to live in the present?"

when she flatly gives her advice: "I'd poison him." Harry's ever-growing gang of randy oldsters roll through the door with a whiff of mothballs and corn liquor on their breath ("It ain't Geritol!" Harry says with satisfaction), defiling the secular sacred space of the family living room. One of them even lugubriously proposes to Mom—conditional, of course, on the death of her bedridden husband.

It's Harry—both the concept and the character, as brought to deliciously malicious life by Glover (a moving force behind the making of the film)—who compensates most dramatically for the stiffness of Burnett's scene-setting and writing. The cast couldn't be more stellar; it also includes the quietly elegant Vionette McGee (Lumbly's wife in real life) and Sheryl Lee Ralph as the wives. And you can't fault their performances.

Yet the actors often get stagey scenes and lines to work with, typified by the younger brother's outburst, "I'm tired of people trying to run my life!" The very stiffness in *To Sleep with Anger's* storytelling, however, also takes us one remove from sitcom-land, highlighting the ritualistic behavior of the respectable and plunging us into the fearful moment when the absurd meets the mundane.

Seeing what's missing: *To Sleep with Anger* is rich in the trappings of African-American subculture. It's in the African-derived trickster figure, the wealth of blues on the soundtrack, and in the host of folk remedies, sayings and habits testifying to the syncretic mix of African and Christian religion in African-American culture. These details also remind us of what is regularly excluded from our purview in the *Batmans* and *Die Hards* of film culture. *To Sleep with Anger's* characters show a depth and richness of African-American experience that's sadly lacking in the collection of cops and drug addicts that blacks usually get to play.

But the film also speaks to general questions of cultural conflict and preservation in a society where the domain of the family steadily shrinks and the domain of the shopping mall grows. The younger brother's equation of happiness with money and his search for independence in all the wrong places is a particularly poignant and familiar problem. *To Sleep with Anger* turns common family dilemma into an idiosyncratic cautionary tale, told with wit and passion. ■

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MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Liquor and fairness

An electoral proposition in California that would raise liquor taxes has added fuel to the argument that the Fairness Doctrine—the rule that broadcasters must air controversy fairly—needs revival. Although the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) effectively retired the rule in 1987, it left the doctrine in place on ballot issues. But many California broadcasters seem not to know that. The liquor lobby fought Proposition 134 with millions of dollars of advertising. When public-interest groups demanded response time, the lobby's ad firm sent a letter to stations threatening to cancel the lucrative ads. The threat—and public-interest groups' demands—threw stations into turmoil. Some refused to give response time, and others refused to accept the paid ads for fear of legal trouble. The rule only requires stations to provide balanced coverage, whether in newscasts, special programming or free time to "the other side." But many broadcasters, especially in radio, say they don't have the resources to produce special news programs; and, they also claim, they're starving for advertising money. The California liquor-tax controversy reinforces a 1988 study by public-interest groups showing that where broadcasters didn't know they still had Fairness Doctrine obligations, they usually just took paid ads while slighting the less well-heeled side of an issue.

Made-to-order movies

The Walt Disney Company took a bold pro-consumer stand when it required theaters playing its movies not to carry advertising before the show. But with all the ads snuggled within Disney movies, who needs any more? In fact, Disney's latest, *Mr. Destiny*, was designed around ad sales. The company charged advertisers \$60,000 for an actor to use the product (and a mere \$20,000 for a visual mention, like images of Scotch tape and Southern Comfort). And then the plot was written around the commissions. So when hero Larry (James Belushi) complains to his wife at breakfast that they're out of Wheaties, the scene comes to you courtesy not of Disney but of General Mills.

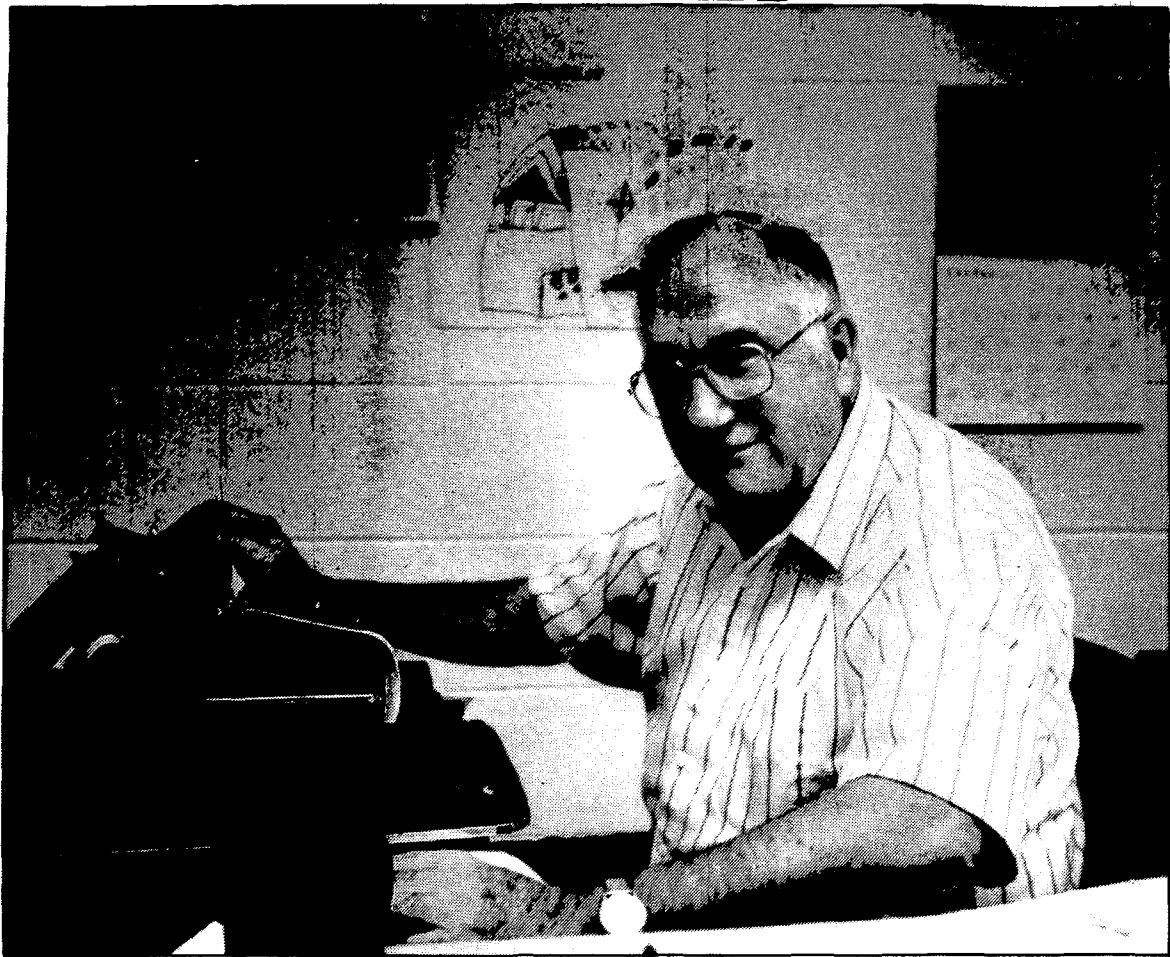
The other budget crisis

It's not just Congress that's sweating budget cuts these days. ABC is considering cutting back its domestic news budget and has put its plans for an overnight news broadcast on hold. The problem, claim ABC executives, is not just the general one of viewer loss—after all, ABC is still No. 1 among the networks—but also the cost of covering Middle East news. Right behind ABC are the other networks, where employees are warily eyeing the threat of layoffs. So along with more spectacular "parachute" reporting (that's when celebrity reporters fly in on deadline to deliver news on location, even if they have to lift the news off the wire services), expect ever-skipier coverage of domestic issues from the most affluent news service in the U.S.

Kids and commercials

After two years of legislative tussles, a law that sets modest limits on the amount of commercial time on kids' television has finally been passed. It's about time. Ever since the Reagan-era FCC relaxed rules on kids' commercials, the numbers have crept up, so that these days some stations air as many as 14 minutes of commercials per hour (compared with an average of eight minutes on grown-ups' programs). Also part of the Reagan-era commercial boom were "program-length commercials," those cartoon shows linked to toy lines such as *My Little Pony* and *He-Man*. Not only did the shows blatantly sell products in the guise of entertainment but they also soaked up time that could have been used for educational programs. The new legislation limits the number of commercials per hour. But the numbers are high enough—for instance, 12 minutes an hour on weekdays and 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends—that the broadcast lobby was happy to support the bill. (Never even in discussion was prohibiting ads on kids' programs altogether, even though studies show that, until the age of seven or eight, children don't distinguish between the two. Such a prohibition might have axed commercially produced kids' programs altogether, and no one else is likely to pick up the slack.) The law also asks the FCC to look at program-length commercials. Further, it creates a small endowment (\$6 million over two years) for making kids' educational programming. President Bush grudgingly deigned not to veto the bill but complained that limiting advertising infringes on the First Amendment, which lets the market decide, "free media responding to the free choices of individual consumers." Bush must believe that children who can't tell a commercial from a program can make a "free choice." ■

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Sam Day: pushing the outside of the protest envelope for decades.

Day by Day: play it again, Sam

Crossing the Line: From Editor to Activist to Inmate—A Writer's Journey

By Samuel H. Day Jr.
Fortkamp Publishing Co.
258 pp., \$15.95

By Bill Lueders

THIS SUMMER AT A NEWSPAPER convention in Pennsylvania, I met an older married couple who for the last several decades have published a small community weekly in Idaho. I knew from reading Sam Day's autobiography in draft form—I was one of about a dozen people he showed it to—that he had once edited a weekly in that state.

Yes, they remembered him, a good writer, good newspaper man. I mentioned that Day—who after leaving Idaho became editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and managing editor of *The Progressive* and who is now co-director of an anti-nuclear group in Madison—recently served a six-month prison term for trespassing on a nuclear-missile launch site. "Oh," the woman said acidly, as though recalling some flaw in Day's character. "Is he being fearless again?"

Cause du jour: To some people who know him mostly by reputation, Day is a caricature, a striker of poses, a clown (incidentally, the costume he wore in 1988 when he earned his prison term). The image of this bespectacled, slightly hunched, outwardly demure 64-year-old man at this or that protest, getting arrested for this or that cause, moves them to scornful dismissal.

It's just Sam Day, they say, being fearless again.

Such attitudes could not survive a reading of Day's autobiography, *Crossing the Line*, subtitled *From Editor to Activist to Inmate—A Writer's Journey*. Day, while recounting his fascinating and often fractious involvements, also reflects upon his inward struggle—his fear, longing, pain and doubt.

This is a thoughtful, not a boastful book. Its central image of crossing the line—that is, confronting authority through personal risk-taking—is also the thread that binds much of Day's life.

Reared in South Africa, as the son of a U.S. diplomat, Day's youth was privileged, even decadent. "Uncle Scotty gave us each a whip and we are whipping the donkeys," he wrote his parents at age 10. "We are having a lovely time."

Still, Day developed a distaste for injustice, such as the "random bullying" of seniors at his boarding school in Johannesburg. A scrawny lad with thick glasses, he grew up feeling the need to prove himself.

In the book's final chapter, "Knowing the bomb," Day wonders whether this need still drives him, an interpretation he doesn't entirely dismiss. But he identifies a larger reason: the existence of the atomic bomb and his personal conviction that nuclear weapons are, in a word, "evil."

"I have never thought this of people who make the bomb. We are all part of that process in one way or another. But the weapon itself is evil, and so too is the policy from which it springs."

Day's personal evolution to this conclusion was a long time in coming. As a boy, before the advent of the bomb, he mainly adopted the prejudices of the society around

PROTEST

him, once writing his parents that most of his friends at prep school in New Hampshire (his father was sent back to the States) "are pretty nice guys, and, to the best of my knowledge, none of them are Jews."

Day's interest in left-wing politics was nurtured during his years at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania by his cousin Jessica from New York—a former Communist turned "capitalist with a social conscience." The decision to pursue a journalistic career rather than a diplomatic one was made with the flip of a coin, and Day became a copyboy for the *Washington Evening Star*. He went on to become "a good military propagandist" during a two-year stint with the U.S. Army. (Later, Day would come to regard the military as "perhaps the greatest of all threats to humanity.")

Before he metamorphosed into a radical, Day went through a liberal phase, working for the Associated Press at the *Idaho Statesman*. Later, he wrote for the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, an experience he fondly recalls: "I loved every aspect of the *Tribune*—the ink-stained walls and rotting floorboards of the decrepit building where we worked, the aroma of lead ingots melting in the pots of the Linotype machines, the hustle and bustle of the newsroom, the crisp finality of the page proofs

coming off the ink-roller, the heft and solidness of the newspaper as it streamed off the press at four in the morning, the sense of community that came from the praises and complaints of readers."

Day quotes extensively—perhaps too much—from his published writings, an exercise that has the perhaps unintended consequence of revealing his development as a writer. His early work is competent but uninspiring, and his excerpts in general lack the passion and immediacy of the narrative around them. Day doesn't really come into his own as a writer, it seems, until he crosses the line into advocacy journalism.

In 1964, Day, his progressive leanings long repressed, became editor of the *Intermountain Observer*, a scrappy weekly in Boise. Under Day's tenure, the paper drew protests from around the world with a photo essay about a church-sponsored "rabbit drive" in eastern Idaho in which teenagers with baseball bats clubbed to death hundreds of the penned animals. Day also ignited a local firestorm by quoting then-radical Tom Hayden using such forbidden words as "motherfucker" in a speech.

But the event that precipitated the paper's demise occurred in 1971, when Day and other staffers staged a traffic blockade to protest a U.S. nuclear test in Alaska. It was, Day recalls, "the first time I crossed the line," and it provided the paradigm for other such crossings to come: "an inner struggle, then a deep fear, then the claim of the action itself, then exhilaration (whatever the outcome), then the sometimes painful satisfaction of having, as the Quakers say, 'spoken truth to power.'"

Pain—feeling and dealing: The outcome, in this case, was that many of the paper's advertisers and its owner withdrew their support. The action also opened what was to be a longstanding rift between Day and his wife Kathleen. "I felt the pain of rejection and the gnawing fear of loosening job security," notes Day. "But the new ground onto which I had marched or stumbled or strayed felt right to me."

What happened, Day explains late in the book, is that "at some point during my middle years the recognition of a unique evil [posed by nuclear weapons] and the urge to confront it crystalized into a religion. By fits and starts I crossed the line from observer to doer, from dispassion to passion, from agnostic to believer."

When the *Intermountain Observer* folded in 1973, Day accepted an offer to become editor of the Chicago-based *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which he transformed from a struggling and boring scientific journal to a viable and respected organ for discussing the nuclear threat. In the process, he carved out the possibility of a comfortable career, which he inwardly rebelled against. "As an institution we took no risks, we

crossed no lines, we played it safe," he writes. "I found myself suffocating in the intellectual elitism and social conservatism of ... the magazine."

In 1978, Day moved to Madison, Wis., to become managing editor of *The Progressive*, where he focused on nuclear issues and soon found himself at the center of a storm created by the U.S. government's efforts to suppress an article by non-scientist Howard Morland describing in detail the workings of the hydrogen bomb, using data gathered from public sources. Day devotes four chapters, roughly a fifth of his book, to this episode, at the time a page-one story throughout the land.

Day renders this history colorfully and well. He recalls editor Erwin Knoll's gleeful excitement prior to a meeting with government officials, as well as Morland's reaction to an energy official's admission that the article contained no substantial inaccuracies: "My God! I didn't really know until now!"

Nukes and rebukes: Eventually, much of the content of the supposedly secret H-bomb article was published by others using the same public sources, and the government lifted its restraining order. Day, seeking a new outlet for his activism, in 1981 helped found Nukewatch, a group devoted to raising consciousness about nuclear weapons. Day furthered this mission through his writings about South Africa's nuclear capability and the trucking of nuclear weapons on U.S. highways and, finally, when he crossed the line that brought him into the ranks of activists who have incurred prison terms for their opposition to the bomb.

Day's published writings about his "prison witness"—especially his insistence that he enjoyed the experience—have always struck me as a bit glib. Here he goes deeper, confessing his doubts about the efficacy of such actions—"Would I be playing the part of a fool, a masochist, a Don Quixote? Was I responding to some overwhelming inner need for attention?"—and his guilt for neglecting his family, in this instance and others, for his activist pursuits.

"I did my best to help and comfort those close to me who bore the brunt of actions I felt called upon to take," writes Day, who has been arrested twice in recent weeks for actions against U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf. "I shared their pain as the cost of crossing the line."

Day's unflinching self-reflection is the book's greatest strength. His actions always have a clear emotional, as well as political, component. The challenge that Sam Day's life presents to the reader—as well as to those who dismiss him with scorn—is to put principle above pragmatism, moral conviction above complicity and to back up those beliefs with more than just words. ■

Bill Lueders is news editor of *Isthmus*, a weekly newspaper in Madison, Wis.

History and the New Left: Madison, Wisconsin, 1950-1970

Edited by Paul Buhle
Temple University Press
295 pp., \$34.95

By Nelson Lichtenstein

IN 1966, MY CHOICE OF GRADUATE schools came down to Berkeley or Madison. I knew that the University of Wisconsin had a great tradition in American history, but the lure of California could hardly be resisted. Berkeley had better

HISTORY

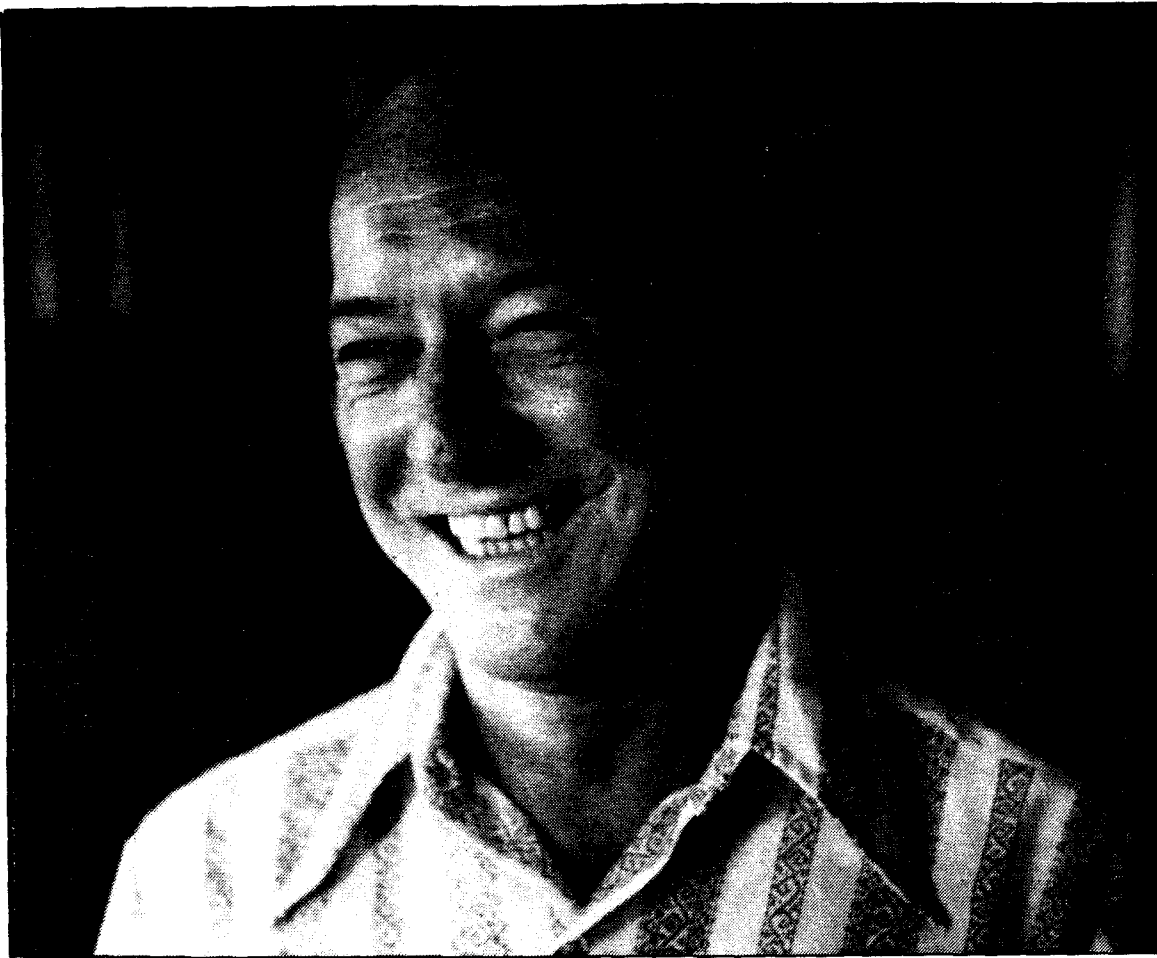
weather and the women of California legend, and its student movement was bigger, better and more exciting than any place else in the country. So I headed west and never had a moment of regret...until now.

Paul Buhle's collection of 28 Madison memoirs successfully recaptures a cultural moment when the study of history there embodied the making of a new, or renewed, radical sensibility about American politics and society. Madison was not the only university town that generated a dynamic, intellectually exciting New Left movement. Berkeley, Cambridge, Ann Arbor, not to mention Hyde Park and the upper West Side of Manhattan, were also places where scholarship and activity fused in the late '50s and early '60s. But Madison's post-war left had its own remarkable character, a marriage of Midwestern progressivism and Jewish New York, which Buhle and the essayists he has assembled recover in this rich and multifaceted retrospective.

Haven for the unpopular: In a long introduction, Buhle offers a fine account of the conditions that for more than a century have made Madison a periodic haven for the more unpopular and radical among the historical profession. Progressive Wisconsin supported a politically engaged university and honored its commitment to academic freedom: "that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which truth can be found." Thus, from Frederick Jackson Turner and John R. Commons at the turn of the century to Merle Curti and Howard K. Beale in the '40s and '50s, the study of history at Wisconsin always made room for a core of dissident scholars.

This tradition was particularly important in the years immediately after World War II, when the university community successfully resisted McCarthyite attack from without and the uncritical celebration of American institutions from within. At Madison, writes Buhle, "hard questions often forbidden elsewhere in McCarthyite Middle America could be asked and given radical answers in an American vein."

Madison's post-war left had three phases, each with its own characteristic relationship to the study of the American past. In the first, outward-bound young partisans from



William Appleman Williams: one of the guiding lights of Madison's post-war left.

A variety of left turns in Madison

the East found the city a safe haven, "a goyishe city with a Jewish heart." This was the mid-'50s Madison of Warren Susman, Herbert Gutman, William Preston and George Rawick, all of whom recall their productive and exciting days as graduate students groping for new ways to answer the old questions posed by their Communist or Trotskyist elders.

Yet the most striking memoir of this generation is not that of a soon-to-be-famous scholar but of a part-time undergraduate, Nina Serrano, who moved to Madison in 1953 to marry fellow New Yorker Saul Landau. Serrano offers an enormously sympathetic portrait of her hectic life as a young mother immersed in Madison's bohemian subculture with its avant-garde theater groups, anti-ROTC demonstrations and periodic visits by the FBI.

Studies on the left: When she left Madison in 1961 ("I ... vowed never to face another winter here"), the key institution of the Madison left was undoubtedly *Studies on the Left* and its most influential professor, William Appleman Williams. *Studies* had been founded in 1959, largely by Williams' students. Like their mentor, *Studies* was scholarly and somewhat skeptical of political activism. Most of its writers took as their subject the ideology and structure of the American elite: implicit in their work was a barely submerged belief that the ruling order had successfully suffocated any genuine opposition, had even turned potential opponents into unwitting

servants of their power. This was the meaning of "corporate liberalism," a key concept, if not of Williams himself, then of such *Studies* mainstays as James Weinstein, Marty Sklar and Eleanor Hakim.

Ronald Radosh was active in the *Studies* circle as well, but the memoir of this Madison radical, who has transformed himself into a neoconservative in recent years, is missing from the volume. It is the collection's most glaring omission. In his absence, Jim Gilbert, whose scholarship and politics evolved quite differently from Radosh's, nevertheless offers a pointed critique of the late '60s New Left spirit: "We learned the exhilaration of action," writes Gilbert of the generation of '60s graduate students. "This point suggests the

major fault line in the history of the radical community at Madison and explains its quick evolution from a rich intellectual world to the explosive activist center it became.... What every editor of *Studies* lamented—a separation between theory and action—was, almost by definition, exacerbated by what occurred. Our history writing and thinking and our actions each seemed to go their

Madison's New Left was a happy marriage of Midwestern progressivism and Jewish New York.

separate ways."

But this judgment seems too sour. It's true, of course, that political militancy flourished at Madison after the violent demonstrations against Dow in 1967. And the theoretically self-

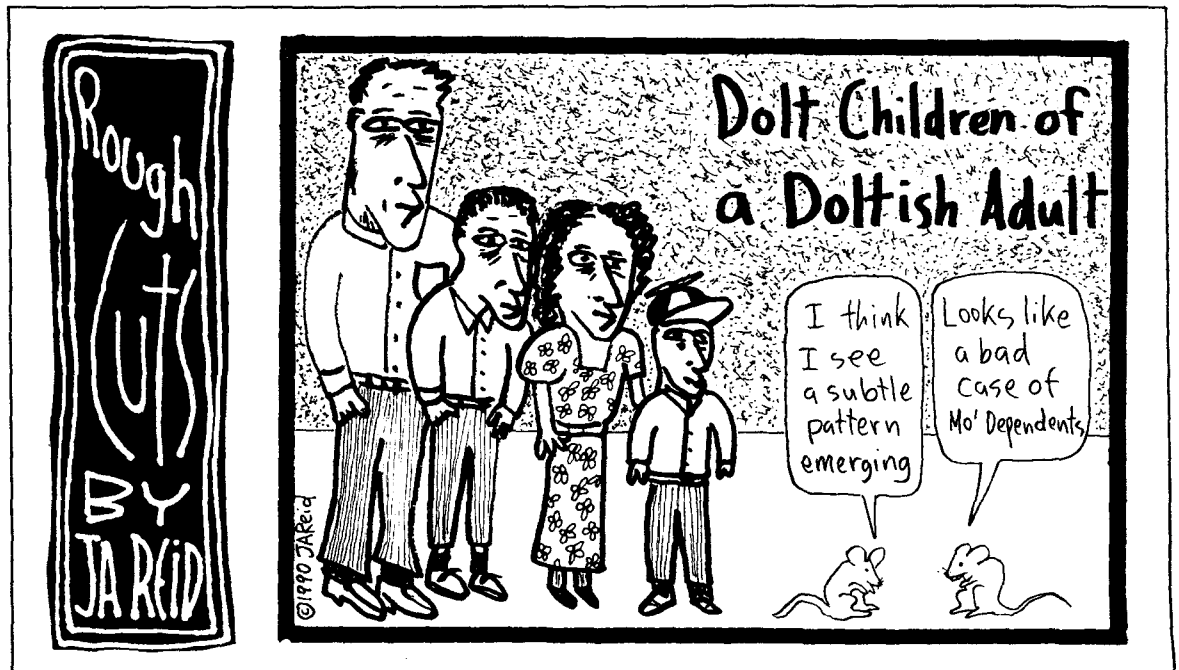
conscious *Studies on the Left* was succeeded in 1967 by *Radical America*, symbolizing the New Left at flood tide. Edited by a new generation of Madison radicals, including Paul and Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Breines and Stuart Ewen, *Radical America* celebrated movement activism and the youth culture, probed the social and cultural contours of the working class and advertised the renaissance of American feminism.

Revolutionary tradition: Madison's late '60s New Left was far larger and more confrontational than anything seen before, but Buhle's collaborators take pains to argue that this New Left was hardly one of mindless activism. Virtually every contributor of the late '60s generation demonstrates the extent to which this student cohort was also profoundly shaped by the ideas and examples of such Madison intellectuals as Williams, Harvey Goldberg, George Mosse, Hans Gerth and Eleanor Hakim.

Goldberg, who routinely filled the largest auditorium on campus with his lectures on the fate of the revolutionary tradition in France, seems an especially attractive figure and a mentor of particular influence on the Madison left from the mid '60s through the '70s. In a wonderfully evocative short portrait, Ron McCrea and Dave Wagner remember the power and moral earnestness of his eloquent, narrative-style lectures. "A stage performer ... a militant *gauchiste*," Goldberg was nevertheless rarely doctrinaire. "Instead, the shape of events in the largest sense, the impulse of the powerless toward freedom, informed his lectures and held generations of students spellbound."

Paul Buhle's extraordinarily readable collection of Madison memoirs reminds us again that the most effective and exciting education takes place where and when ideas have power and political consequence. One need not fear nostalgia to recognize that Madison of the '50s and '60s was such a classroom. ■

Nelson Lichtenstein, who teaches history at the University of Virginia, is one of the authors of *Who Built America*, Vol. II, forthcoming from Pantheon.



Auto

Continued from page 11

Department of Transportation—little known because its findings were so contrary to the prevailing political orthodoxy—found that every car in an urban area represents a net loss to society of nearly 12 cents per vehicle mile in terms of air pollution, noise and congestion. Figuring 18 miles per gallon and allowing for inflation, that's a burden of just under \$3 a gallon in 1990 dollars. More recently, the Brooklyn-based environmental consulting firm of Konheim & Ketcham calculated the loss to society from accidents as well as pollution, noise and congestion even higher—about \$5.25 a gallon.

Thus, the net subsidy for the private automobile may be anywhere from \$4 to \$9 a gallon of gas, or \$400 billion a year or more for the entire U.S. economy—a figure that does not include the cost of the Persian Gulf deployment, another public contribution toward private oil-auto interests, or the potentially catastrophic cost of global warming, toward which cars, trucks and buses are a prime contributor.

Four hundred billion dollars a year or more is an economic drag equal to 8 percent of GNP, a burden unequaled in Western Europe and Japan, where transportation and

land-use policies are less grossly imbalanced. As the U.S. economy grows more and more dysfunctional, moreover, the burden is likely to increase. A system that reduces its cities to rubble while promoting ugly slash-and-burn-style development in the countryside is a system of planned irrationality, of institutionalized chaos, one that breeds failure and frustration where formerly it generated goods and success. America, it turns out, is not in pursuit of the good life as it tools down the highways but is driving itself straight to the poorhouse.

What's the answer? Certainly not fuel-efficiency standards that, in isolation, lower motorists' costs while adding to the burden on general society. Ideally, rather, the cure for auto addiction is to go cold turkey by eliminating the subsidies that promote it. Stopping national policy on a dime is painful, particularly for working people who spend more of their disposable income on gasoline.

As part of a socialist reindustrialization program—one based on a narrowing of income differentials and democratic control of industrial investment—the consequences would be mitigated by earmarking auto taxes for mass transit and urban reconstruction. Meanwhile, a more balanced transportation system would mean not just trains and subways but ferries, bikes, auto-free pedestrian zones and investment in promising new technologies such as high-speed magnetic-levitation trains currently under development in Germany and Japan. (See *In These Times*, June 6.)

It would mean not just jobs in major urban centers but also in small towns and cities that were well-served by trains and trolleys as recently as the early '20s. Mobility would increase, and efficiency would improve, with positive spin-offs for the rest of the economy. Environmentally, de-subsidization would promote more efficient land use by en-

couraging people and businesses to locate within walking or cycling distance of one another in compact villages, towns and cities, rather than stringing themselves out along highways. There would be more room for agriculture, industry, people and open space.

Instead of vast, wind-swept parking lots, there would be train stations at the center of every community, trolley lines and Dutch-style public garages for storing and renting bikes. Cars would not disappear, presumably. Because traffic would be reduced and the countryside cleansed of billboards and malls, driving might even wind up being more fun. But cars would no longer be the ubiquitous means of everyday transport.

In the non-ideal world, of course, things are more complicated. Obviously, American capitalism is no more capable of dealing with a grossly inefficient transportation system than with other dysfunctional aspects of the U.S. economy. Whether it's Spain in the 17th century or Russia in the early 20th, empires rarely exhibit much in the way of rationality on the way down, and America's governing classes, no exception to the rule, will undoubtedly continue building highways, slapping on new pollution controls and carving out low-tax urban development zones, only

to wind up wondering why things grow ever more congested and inefficient. In such circumstances, exploitation of working people can only intensify.

The socialist alternative is to support stiff highway taxes to fund mass transit and urban development but to oppose them if the purpose is to fund the Pentagon and plug the federal deficit. Socialists are not responsible, of course, for a destructive \$400-billion-plus annual subsidy, just as they are not responsible for collapsing home real-estate values or a disintegrating banking system. Rather than shoring these structures up, they should hold capitalism to account for the human costs that result when they go to pieces.

Meanwhile, groups such as the Sierra Club should cease running full-page ads like the one they took out in the *New York Times* and other papers shortly after the invasion of Kuwait calling on Congress to lower prices at the pump and adopt tough new fuel-efficiency standards in order to conserve energy. Like anyone else, yuppie backpackers would like to have their cake and eat it too in the form of a cleaner environment and cheaper gas. Like everyone else, though, they can't. □

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BOSTON

November 17-18

OCCUPATION AND INTERVENTION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. A conference organized by the Middle East Justice Network. What are the roots of the current crisis? How can we understand the massive U.S. military deployment in the region? What are its implications for democracy and for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Speakers include Eqbal Ahmad and Noam Chomsky. Registration (includes lunch) \$20, \$10 students. Location: Massachusetts College of Art Tower Auditorium, located at 621 Huntington Ave. To register in advance, send check to P.O. Box 558, Cambridge, MA 02238. For more information call (617) 666-8061.

April 30

Call for submissions for Fiction Anthology about Lesbian and Gay Parenting from men, women, teens and children. Looking to represent a wide spectrum of experience: artificial insemination, adoption, custody issues, choosing/not choosing to parent, child/parent/friend relationships, multi-ethnic perspectives, etc. Prose only. All submissions must be double-spaced. Contributors will be paid. Address submissions and requests for information to: Parenting Anthology, 152 Kittredge St., Boston, MA 02131. Please include SASE. Submission deadline: April 30, 1991.

PHILADELPHIA

November 30-December 2

A NEW STAGE IN THE BATTLE FOR UNION DEMOCRACY, a conference held by the Association for Union Democracy at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel. The conference is scheduled for Friday evening, and all day Saturday and Sunday. Featured speakers include Glenn Berrien, president, Mail Handlers Union; Jerry Tucker, director, New Directions Movement; Jane Slaughter, editor, *Labor Notes*; Lewie Anderson, president, REAP; Ray Rogers, Corporate Campaign; Ron Carey, candidate for Teamsters president; Ken Paff, national organizer, Teamsters for a Democratic Union; Kim Fellner, executive director, National Writers Union; Victor Reuther, founder, UAW; and Joseph "Chip" Yablonski, attorney. For more information, contact AUD, YMCA Building, 30 Third Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217, (718) 855-6650.

EVANSTON, IL

February 15-17

Feminist graduate students at Northwestern University invite interested graduate students at universities in the Midwest to submit abstracts and/or proposals for the **FIFTH ANNUAL FEMINIST GRADUATE STUDENTS' CONFERENCE** to be held February 15-17, 1991. Proposals should be one page and postmarked by Nov. 30, 1990. For more information, call (708) 491-7940 or write MFGSC, Dept. Neuro-biology and Physiology, 2153 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60201.

NEW YORK

November 11-17

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL

SUNDAY, NOV. 11—(Haymarket martyrs executed, 1887) RealPoetik Reading Series: Apathy Press—Tom de Venti, Jennifer Blowdryer, Carl Watson, Sandy Castle and Richard Sober; 3 p.m.; \$5.

MONDAY, NOV. 12—Video showing of *Perestroika from Below*, a documentary about the July 1989 Ukrainian miners' strike; Daniel Walkowitz and Barbara Abrash, producers (wine and cheese reception to follow); 8 p.m.; \$5.

TUESDAY, NOV. 13—(Strike against General Motors, 1945) Bertell Ollman: Workshop on Dialectics (first of four sessions); tuition \$40; 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV. 15—The New Credit Economy; Doug Henwood; 8 p.m.; \$7.

SATURDAY, NOV. 17—Guy Klucsevsek in concert; 8 p.m.; \$7.

All events take place at the New York Marxist School, 79 Leonard St., New York, NY 10011, (212) 941-0332.

MINNEAPOLIS

November 9-12

CREATING CHANGE, the third annual conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, will be held at the Holiday Inn Metrodome. Highlights are the Fundraising Institute and the People of Color Institute. Registration is \$120 by Sept. 14, \$150 after. For registration forms and more information on NGLTF Cooperating Organization rates, limited income rates and the conference in general, contact NGLTF, 1517 U St. NW, Washington, DC 20009, Attn: Creating Change. (202) 332-6483.

WASHINGTON, DC

November 16

PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN ZAIRE: a dialogue between the Zairean opposition and members of the international community who support the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Zaire. At Howard University, Blackburn Center, 2419 4th Street NW, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Registration: \$15, student \$10. For more information, contact the Rainbow Lobby, (202) 457-0700.

February 15-16

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has announced that the Third National Conference on Organic/Sustainable Agriculture Policies will be held at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel. The annual conference, which focuses on state and national policies that promote more sustainable agriculture practices, will be co-sponsored by the Institute for Alternative Agriculture, the Texas Department of Agriculture and several other state agriculture departments. It will bring together agricultural scientists and representatives of consumer, environmental and other organizations for two exciting days of

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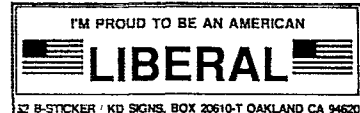
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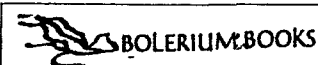
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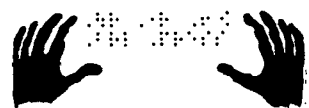


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LETTERS

Dear In These Times Ideologist,

Is it a recession yet? And, anyway, what is the difference between a recession, a deficit, the S&L scandal and the Persian Gulf crisis? They all seem to blend together on the news.

Graham Rudman
Hollings, Texas

Dear Mr Rudman,

Yes, it is a recession. Two centuries ago, the left-leaning Voltaire said that the art of government consists mainly of taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens to give to another. In America, the presently fashionable ideology holds that any attempt to shift money from the rich to the poor and middling classes is misbegotten, economically destructive and subversive of the moral values of the lower classes. On the other hand, all attempts to transfer money from the bottom and middle to the rich are wonderfully, if sometimes mysteriously and not very apparently, beneficial to all (if not actually ordained by God).

The recession, the deficit, the S&L scandal and Persian Gulf crisis all revolve around the rate at which money should be sent to the rich. Some politicians fear that the economy is already so dangerously top heavy that it will topple over (a recession) and make a big mess (a depression). Other politicians say, who cares, good times or bad, their job is to serve the fat cats who put them in power. The Persian Gulf crisis serves both as a means for distributing money upward by way of defense spending and gas gouging, and a diversion from the untoward publicity about the other money skewing schemes you mentioned. For more on the role of diversion, see the next letter.

Dear In These Times Ideologist,

I've noticed that every time our government sends our Jaguar-like military machine (it looks like a winner, but mostly to mechanics in the dealer's repair shop) to some remote part of the world, it uses the word "interests" as its excuse. Is there any difference between national as opposed to personal "interests?"

Interested Observer
Beltway, Md.

Dear I.O.,

Not really. Let's say your offspring's room is littered with non-recyclable fast food pack-

aging. If he expressed no special interest in it, it would be trash and you'd be annoying him to dispose of it properly. But if he said he was seriously interested in collecting such items to analyze our culture and to provide future generations with insights into their forebears, you might see the mess in his room in a new, more respectful light.

Our government declares that its interest in hornning in on the affairs of faraway lands is not, as it appears, intentioned by greed, busybodyness, hubris and an intense need to seek foreign diversions to domestic woes, but is in fact divinely inspired and benignly motivated. And besides, our national security requires access to foreign oil, Scotch tape, T-shirts, whatever. The diversion factor is most attractive to our leaders. We can only blame ourselves for the mess we make at home. But by taking interest in the business of foreigners, we can blame them for our faults and also claim that our domestic political enemies are really at the treacherous service of those foreigners. So, I.O., an interest is what you make it.

Dear In These Times Ideologist,

I'm a middle-class, middle-aged family man with a patriotism problem. Psychologists, social workers and the clergy look at me blankly when I describe the nature of this problem. Someone suggested that you might be of help. Here's my story.

Being a patriot, I decided as a youth to model myself on the U.S. of A. I narrowly educated myself, got a well-paying job as an international policeman, married a nice girl and had children.

I loved my work, which was a lot more exciting than my family, and spent most of my time far away from home. My family was very proud of me, and I would tell my kids adventure stories when I visited.

Then I ran into some bad luck in the '70s. My company went broke in Southeast Asia, and I was laid off. I moved back home and opened a guns 'n ammo shop out on the strip with my severance pay and some savings.

By now my kids were getting older and sassier, not to mention my wife. The house and the neighborhood had both seen better days. The kids needed money for school and dentists, and the wife wanted a roof that didn't leak and plumbing that didn't back up. But money was short, since I was investing so heavily in the store. I figured the best thing was to get a bank loan to install a high-tech

security system at the house to protect my valuable gun collection.

The wife said it was crazy to put a security system around a house that was falling apart. I hit the ceiling! Just the week before, I had bought a limited-edition UZI bearing the engraved signature of the inventor, Uziel Gal himself, in a special leather and plush presentation case with a certificate guaranteeing that the weapon had been used in three drug shootouts and two Chuck Norris movies. I wasn't about to let the neighborhood junkies rip me off. It was a matter of principle. And where did my wife get the nerve, questioning me?

I am deeply troubled. I have done everything right, everything patriotic. And this is the thanks I get for it. I sought help, as I mentioned, but to no avail. Therefore, I am asking your ideological guidance. Flagging Interest
Alta Coma, Calif.

Dear F.I.

If you didn't love your country so much, you might consider reordering your priorities by paying more attention to your wife and kids, fixing up the house, working for neighborhood improvement and getting into a more socially benign line of work. But that wouldn't be patriotic. Fortunately, your letter comes at a perfect time. There is fresh work available in your field in Arabia, with possibilities for advancement into Mesopotamia. The patriotic thing to do is leave your mundane domestic problems behind and take off for the Persian Gulf.

Dear In These Times Ideologist,

We are a correct faction of Third World groupies, recently returned from Central America and now trendily eager to tread the burning sands of Arabia in our Birkenstocks and kaffiehs. We have been looking into the possibilities of mobilizing an Iraqi support coalition called CISBOOMBAH—Cities in Solidarity with Baghdad, Oscar, Omar, Mosul, Basra and Howie. (Oscar, Omar and Howie are members of our faction framed by the fascist New York City transit police on a trumped-up fare-beating rap.) We wrote a letter of support to Saddam Hussein, and he replied that the best thing we could do for the cause was to get jobs as baggage handlers at Kennedy Airport. What do you think?

Sandra Lista
New York City

Dear S.L.,

Sounds like a dynamite idea—but not for you. ■